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Official Records

9th plenary meeting
Friday, 2 July 1999, 7 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Opertti ..... (Uruguay)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Mra (Myanmar), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 7.15 p.m.

Agenda item 8 *(continued)*

Overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development

The Acting President: I give the floor to His Excellency The Honourable Ketasipai Song Shem, Minister of Health of Vanuatu.

Mr. Song (Vanuatu): It is a great honour and privilege for me to represent the Republic of Vanuatu and my Government at this special session of the General Assembly on the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and to have the opportunity to deliver my country's statement on issues of population and development following the 1994 Cairo Conference and the subsequent International Forum for the Operational Review and Appraisal of the Implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, held at The Hague.

First of all, I wish to commend the excellent work prepared and carried out at the country, regional and global levels by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) as an advocate for population and development issues. We are grateful for the convening of a regional ministers' meeting to address regional responses to the Programme of Action of the ICPD by Pacific island countries, and for the work of The Hague Forum and the meetings of the preparatory committee for the special session, held from 24 to 30 March 1999 here in New York.

I wish to assure the Assembly that my Government is committed to carrying out the resolutions and plan of action to be agreed on and adopted at this special session.

With respect to population and development concerns, following structural changes adopted by my Government with a view to carrying out a comprehensive reform programme for improved delivery of public services, the Government of Vanuatu has given priority in the economic sector to addressing private-sector lead growth and employment generation. Our purpose is to improve the quality of life of average and low income earners and to encourage equitable distribution of goods and services in the economic and social sector without excluding the customary and traditional values observed by communities, and to integrate programmes and activities in a manageable manner to ensure that strong community participation, commitment and ownership in various development areas can and will continue to be sustained.

Another focus is the development and redesign of advocacy tools to improve awareness and communication skills in basic language that is simple and clear, and that can be understood by our communities. This can also contribute to bringing about major changes in human

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behaviour and habits on population and development through an intersectoral approach. However we address the issues, emphasizing the economic, social and cultural aspects of population and development as integrated into various sectors, my Government strongly believes that the Programme of Action can be achieved only if we can accept the standard rules and procedures in principle — but are able, when it comes to the implementation of programmes and activities, to be flexible to allow for adjustments based on every country's specific needs.

This is because our countries have been going and continue to go through different development changes. We must also take into account our cultures, values and beliefs in order to ensure that ownership is developed in the name of change and growth. Therefore, if we are to achieve the goals of the resolutions of the special session, it is equally important always to think globally but, in our national endeavours, to act locally by engaging major stakeholders to work collaboratively and not competitively.

We have a lot to learn and share from our experiences through the transfer of skills and we must be united in our common goals if we, as heads of Governments and representatives, are to achieve the targeted Programme of Action and to guide this generation into the new millennium. By continuing to educate and re-educate our countrymen at all levels and age groups on the impact of population and development issues, we can avoid any unexpected depletion of resources due to our ignorance or deliberate acts.

In conclusion, I wish to affirm my Government's and country's commitment to and endorsement of the draft resolutions of this special session and to participate fully in the implementation of the Programme of Action.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Maman Sambo Sidikou, Director of the Office of the President of the Niger.

Mr. Sidikou (Niger) (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the delegation of the Niger, I wish to congratulate Mr. Opertti on his unanimous election to the presidency of the General Assembly at this special session on population and development.

May I also give a well-deserved tribute to the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, and to Mrs. Nafis Sadik, Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) for their tireless dedication in the service of the ideals of humanity.

One of the challenges that faces us all is that of an adequate correlation between demographic growth and the imperatives of development. Niger, a least developed country, landlocked and largely desert, has an estimated population of over 9 million that is growing at an average annual rate of 3.4 per cent that would see its population doubling every 21 years. The fertility and mortality rates of my country are among the world's highest, not to mention the other indices of human development, each more discouraging than the next, which go towards explaining why my country is considered to be one of the two poorest in the world.

Given this reality, the authorities of the Niger have adopted an integrated and comprehensive approach to issues of population and development, taking due account of the close link between population policies and programmes and the struggle against poverty.

In implementing its population policy, my country — in cooperation with the private sector, non-governmental organizations and other sectors of civil society — has adopted its first programme of priority measures and investments for the period 1996-2000. Through this programming instrument, the Niger has taken into account the recommendations arising from the Cairo Conference, especially the drafting and implementation of a national health and reproduction policy. Appropriate institutions have been established to carry out the follow-up to this policy: the National Reproductive Health Office; the National Population Commission, a coordinating agency of the Prime Minister's Cabinet; an inter-ministerial technical support group for the population policy; and a ministerial department specifically in charge of population issues.

The impact of this policy would have been all the greater on reproductive health and family-planning questions if the adequate financial means had been available to complement the limited capacities of my country, which has been shaken by an unprecedented financial crisis and the political transition difficulties of establishing stable democratic institutions.

Nevertheless, the efforts that have been made have allowed my country, *inter alia*, to raise the rate of contraceptive use from 4.4 per cent in 1992 to 8.2 per cent in 1998, thanks especially to the involvement of all sectors of our society. Thus, the private sector, non-governmental organizations and civil society today play a fundamental role in the conception and implementation

of initiatives and measures to carry out the national population policy.

Clearly, no population policy can succeed without the participation of women — who, in the Niger, represent over half the total population — in development activities. That is why my country has adopted a national policy to promote the status of women, based principally on the search for solutions to the main obstacles to its full evolution.

Obviously, in this as in every other sphere, our achievements are subject to influences in my country, particularly social and cultural influences that, in the Niger as elsewhere, unfortunately do not favour the promotion of the status of women. With the aim of encouraging a rapid change in attitudes, we in the Niger, in cooperation with UNFPA, have implemented an information, education and communication policy that has allowed us, *inter alia*, to create an inter-ministerial committee on this issue and a group of Islamic associations to support the Government's activities in matters of reproductive health and promoting the status of women.

I wish to take the pleasant opportunity of this special session to mention, in the context of these outreach measures, the convening in Niamey, from 10 to 13 November 1998, of an international colloquium on Islam and population. This colloquium, under the aegis of the President of the Republic of the Niger himself — and in which we were honoured by the participation of Mrs. Nafis Sadik — allowed us to formulate an orthodox interpretation of the precepts of Islam on the rights of women in reproductive health issues. On behalf of the Niger, I wish to thank all those countries and international organizations that participated in the colloquium for their good work and the results it achieved. My delegation has provided to representatives at this session a summary record, in the form of a special journal, of the conclusions of that forum.

In conclusion, I wish to recall another important action linked to the issue of population and development: the general population census that my country shall undertake this year with the generous help of our development partners, including UNFPA, of course, the United Nations Development Programme, the European Union, the World Bank and our bilateral partners. This census is important chiefly because our most recent one took place in 1988. There is also, however, the deliberate intention of the Niger's political transition authorities to bequeath to future leaders, soon to be democratically elected, a solid basis from which they may pursue activities that have already been launched. In the Niger, we do not doubt for one moment the international community's readiness to support our efforts in this sector, which is so vital to the eradication of poverty. This readiness would be best expressed by an increase in the means available to UNFPA, which is fighting at our side on behalf of the well-being of our people.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to Her Excellency Mrs. Indra Chandarpal, Minister of Human Services and Social Security of Guyana.

Mrs. Chandarpal (Guyana): As I take the floor during this twenty-first special session of the General Assembly for the review and appraisal of the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, I do so on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and would wish, in these final stages of the session, to commend Mr. Opertti for his sterling leadership of our deliberations over the last three days. We have, during this time, witnessed the reaffirmation of the political commitment made in Cairo to the Programme of Action and have heard many testimonials to the efforts made over the last five years in pursuit of those commonly accepted goals and objectives. Yet, as we stand at the threshold of the new millennium, we can all recognize that there is much which remains to be done.

In 1994, at the historic International Conference on Population and Development — the largest intergovernmental conference on population and development ever held — we pledged our collective efforts to addressing the critical challenges and interrelationships between population and sustained economic growth in the context of sustainable development. We set ourselves both quantitative and qualitative goals and accepted that their achievement would not only require the commitment and actions of individual nations, but would also pivot on a new global partnership among all the world's countries and peoples, based on a sense of shared but differentiated responsibility for each other and for our planetary home.

Our review and appraisal of actions since Cairo has shown that much progress has been made in the last five years. Governments have realistically tackled population issues, and people the world over have benefited from the positive results of the many policy changes which have been instituted in order to achieve the targets we set ourselves in the Programme of Action. Where due attention has been given to education — in particular to

the goal of universal access to primary education and to the value of the education of children, particularly of girls — benefits have accrued to the wider society, as women have moved closer to contributing to the development process through the realization of their full potential.

The targeting of improved basic health services for all, in particular women, whose basic but special health needs are often neglected, has borne fruit in many instances. It is no secret that healthy populations are most cost-effective and can participate constructively in the development of their nations. Yet Cairo's goals for strengthening basic health systems and programmes, including reproductive and sexual health programmes, are being pursued with varying degrees of success. The HIV/AIDS pandemic continues to ravage populations, even as mortality and morbidity take their toll as a result of infectious, parasitic and water-borne diseases, such as tuberculosis and malaria, to name but two. Our review shows that maternal mortality and morbidity remain high, and adolescents continue to face special health risks.

Though Cairo and other international conferences have highlighted the importance of the empowerment of women and the promotion and protection of their basic human rights, much remains to be done if the productive contribution of this important sector of the population is to be effectively harnessed. Advocacy for gender equality and equity and for the inclusion of gender perspectives in policy formation and programme implementation is a key element for Cairo implementation, and though some progress has been made, there is obviously a long way to go.

Based on our assessment of progress since 1994, we believe that the holistic approach to population and development which Cairo advocated needs to be clearly reaffirmed. Our review seems to indicate that although efforts have been made to incorporate population concerns into development strategies, the need for action to achieve sustained economic growth in the context of sustainable development is being subsumed in many instances by the exclusive targeting of population issues. I submit to the Assembly that it is unrealistic to anticipate that the Programme of Action can be ultimately successful if the important framework of development is not supported.

The Programme in its Principles reaffirms the right to development as a universal and inalienable right and an integral part of fundamental human rights and places the human person at the centre of development. Moreover, it reaffirms that in the pursuit of sustained economic growth in the context of sustainable economic development, all countries should recognize their common but differentiated responsibilities. The developed countries acknowledge the responsibility that they bear in the international pursuit of sustainable development and should continue to improve their efforts to promote sustained economic growth and to narrow imbalances in a manner that can benefit countries, particularly the developing countries.

As developing countries, we continue to put our efforts and resources into achieving an improved quality of life for our people through development. Our problems, and their solutions, are all interrelated. The efforts of developed countries to assist are on record. Yet, even as we acknowledge recent developments like the Cologne initiative, we recognize that resources to support the development efforts of developing countries need to be made more manifest. Addressing such issues as the alleviation of the debt burden and the eradication of poverty will in itself promote the achievement of the goals of the Programme of Action.

In effect, financial resources are an important part of the equation crafted in Cairo. Our current review and appraisal of the last five years establishes clearly that realization of the commitment to the cost estimates of the Programme of Action has been uneven. While developing countries as a whole are well on their way to meeting their projected share of the package, our developed partners fall alarmingly short of the finish line. I take this opportunity, therefore, in the true spirit of Cairo, to urge our developed partners to pursue this aspect of the Programme of Action with the same vigour as all others. Financial resources are paramount to implementation, and both this review and, ultimately, the Programme of Action will be exercises in futility if financial resources are not forthcoming in a timely manner. Our assessment in this special session of how we are progressing with implementation should prompt steady remedial action and concerted efforts to work within the specified framework.

It can escape none of us that the interrelationships among the goals and objectives of Cairo, and among those involved in implementing the Programme of Action, determine the very nature of the partnership which must be established and sustained at all levels if we are to achieve success in our efforts. This review process has been instructive in confirming our awareness of this need to work in concert and has shown clearly what is possible when we do. We have worked many long hours in the preparatory committee for this special

session in order to realistically review our efforts over the last five years and, based on those results, to determine the way forward. Though we are but five years into what is a 20-year-long global process, the paths we choose now will ultimately influence the point at which we finally arrive. If nothing else, we are acutely aware of the symbiotic nature of our existence and conscious that success for Cairo's goals will be achieved only when we work together.

The hopes of the new millennium are shared by all people in developing and developed countries alike. Successful implementation of the goals and objectives of the International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action will make many of those expectations a reality. This review process, I believe, has reinvigorated us. Looking back to Cairo, as we will soon at the millennium, we anticipate that the immediate future will see a translation of the political will expressed at this special session into a more efficient and effective realization of our commonly accepted goals and responsibilities.

Before I conclude, may I add a word from a national perspective. While for most countries overpopulation is an obstacle to development, in Guyana we face a problem of underpopulation in relation to the size of the country. Full development, as we know, can only be achieved if there is a critical mass of human resources. At the same time, Governments of small countries such as mine must face the cost of supporting population growth. I mention this challenge here so that the international community and the United Nations system as a whole are sensitized to this reverse side of the population question.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to Her Excellency Ms. Mariam Mirianashvili, Member of Parliament, Chairperson of the Women's and Children's Protection and Family Development Issues Subcommittee of Georgia.

Ms. Mirianashvili (Georgia) (*spoke in Russian*): Please allow me, on behalf of the delegation of Georgia, to extend sincere congratulations to the President of the General Assembly at this special session on his election and to express our assurance that the Assembly will attain the lofty objectives of this session. We would also like to extend our congratulations to Mrs. Nafis Sadik, Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund, and to Secretary-General Kofi Annan.

As a full-fledged member of international community, Georgia remains committed to the goals of Cairo Conference on Population and Development and of The Hague Forum as well.

The collapse of the Soviet Union has had a devastating effect on the economic, social and political life of Georgia. We have gone through and survived a harsh period of civil war, internal conflict and economic crisis that had serious consequences for the society. The unresolved conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia have been going on for almost 10 years and have resulted in massive outflow of population from these regions. Naturally, children, women and the elderly have been the most severely affected. It would not be correct to say that all the problems involved in granting women their rights are of such an extreme nature.

According to the most current data, the population of Georgia is 5.4 million. However, statistics gathered by non-governmental organizations working on population issues indicate that there are 500,000 emigrés from Georgia. The social and economic hardships are the main reason for emigration during this transition period. At the beginning of this year, the Government of Georgia was planning to conduct a census for the first time since 1989, but because of the budgetary crisis this important initiative was not completed. The data below are based, therefore, on information from the department of State statistics.

Even though Georgia is a developing country, from a demographic point of view it can be considered among the developed countries. Since 1995 the average population growth rate has been 0.1 per cent — although it is also essential to mention that certain regions of Georgia, especially the mountainous areas, are undergoing depopulation. Responding to this challenge, a month ago the Parliament of Georgia passed a law on the social and economic development of mountainous regions, a law aimed at the elimination of disparity in development.

It is expected that by the year 2010 the population of Georgia will reach 5.8 million. There is also a high level of internal migration and ongoing urbanization. The proportion of the population living in cities has increased to two thirds of the total. Even though there is a certain positive change in infant and maternal mortality rates, they remain high at 23 and 33 respectively. The child mortality rates of males up to age five is 28, of females 21. These are also high. The average index of fertility is 1.9. The average life expectancy of males is 68.5 and of females 76.7.

Health and education expenditures account for less than 4 per cent of the gross domestic product. International assistance to Georgia is $1,172 million.

Proceeding from the above and taking into account its social resources and strong political will to implement the Programme of Action in order to attract investments for its development, Georgia has set priorities in the field of reproductive health, priorities that have already been advanced by State legislation, in particular by a family code and a law on health protection. Several sections of the health protection law are devoted to the implementation of this right. The funds earmarked for special programmes in the State budget include a programme to combat HIV and AIDS, education programmes on family planning, and others. There are also programmes to provide access to contraceptives for the population of child-bearing age as well as adolescents.

It is necessary to mention the special needs of young people in education, health care and development, in particular in connection with their sexual and reproductive health, with the realization of their individual potential and in order to maximize their input into the social development process.

The State policy targeting the change of the age structure is sensitive to the needs of the elderly population of the country, the percentage of which is increasing due to the fall of the birth rate. Notwithstanding historical and cultural traditions, by which elderly people have always been greatly respected, the improvement of their standard of living requires ongoing political efforts to mobilize and utilize available resources in the context of families, communities, civil organizations and the private sector. Improvements in health care, financial security and the creation of sustainable livelihoods for the elderly are among the priorities of our country, given the ageing population.

The foreseeable consequences of demographic development, as an integral part of the elaboration of social development policy and strategy, constitute the basic principle of the concept of the unified State, social-demographic family policy of Georgia up to the year 2005. The concept was prepared and brought to life by a decree of the President of Georgia, Mr. Shevardnadze.

Special attention in the context of sustainable development is being focused on the problems of women from a gender perspective. A decree of the President on the creation of a commission on elaborating State policy on the development of women and for the adoption of a plan of action for the advancement of women by the year 2000 ensured progress in this direction. The plan provides for the establishment of institutional mechanisms and for strengthening the role of women in the decision-making process.

In elaborating and implementing these and other programmes, non-governmental organizations and the private sector are playing an important role. It is important to mention that despite the limited resources, the State budget envisages the establishment of a special fund for the development of civil society.

These are just the first steps of the new democracy of our nation, which is emerging from a profound crisis. These steps are targeted at the preservation and development of our main assets: our human resources.

Countries with economies in transition and enjoying the support of the international community can be compared to young plants. Although they need special care, they can grow into strong fruit-bearing trees for the benefit of all.

Once again let me express our gratitude for the assistance given us by the international community and donor organizations. I hope that this cooperation will be increased and be even more successful in the future.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency The Honourable Elijah Kipkoskei Sumbeiywo, Assistant Minister of Kenya.

Mr. Sumbeiywo (Kenya): I wish to join previous delegations in expressing my delegation's satisfaction at the election of Ambassador Didier Opertti to the presidency, and in assuring him of our support.

Five years after the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), the Government of Kenya has registered a reasonable level of success in the area of reproductive health, as evidenced in the 1998 demographic and health survey. In addition to successfully transforming family-planning programmes into reproductive health care policies and programmes, the Government's deliberate policy of promoting education and training of women and girl children in spite of the realities of a difficult economic situation has also played a significant role in achieving a desired decline in fertility rates. Today, Kenya's total fertility rate has declined, from an estimated 8.1 live births per

woman in 1978 to 4.7 live births in 1998. Consequently, our annual population growth rate has also declined, from 3.8 per cent in 1979 to an estimated 2.5 per cent in 1998 — and possibly lower with the impact of the scourge of HIV/AIDS.

In line with the call for conducting population censuses as we enter the third millennium, Kenya will carry out its sixth national population census this century beginning on the night of 24-25 August 1999 and ending seven days later on 31 August 1999. The primary goal of Kenya's national population policy for sustainable development as contained in sessional paper No. 1 of 1997 is the implementation of appropriate policies, strategies and programmes which take into account the relationship between population and the availability of national resources. This is aimed at improving the quality of life and the well-being of all Kenyans.

The population policy thus aims at improving standards of living and quality of life; improving health and welfare through information and education; further reducing fertility and mortality rates; encouraging Kenyans to adhere to small family size; promoting family stability while recognizing the rights of women and children; and eliminating social and cultural practices that have a negative impact on women and girls.

In the pursuance of these goals, the Government of Kenya has been working in partnership with civil society. Here, the objectives include minimizing the consequences of high population growth on development; expanding coverage of provision of primary health care services, especially reproductive health services, by making them more accessible and affordable to all communities; increasing awareness about sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS, and promoting behavioural changes; encouraging private-sector investment in the provision of basic social services, including education; and ensuring the integration of population concerns into development processes.

I feel proud to mention that, in our endeavours to strengthen local partnerships, one of our oldest and most active partners in family planning and reproductive health care is a non-governmental organization which celebrated its forty-second birthday this year by moving to larger premises, thus establishing its sustainability. Currently, that organization has a network of branches throughout the republic. In addition to family planning and reproductive health services, it has expanded its programmes to include those aimed at reducing infant mortality and intensifying adolescent education about sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS. With an estimated 50 per cent of our total population below the age of 15, the Government welcomes this and similar types of collaborative efforts which target specific groups.

With regard to demographic goals, we are aiming to reduce infant mortality rates, which currently have been adversely affected by slow economic growth. The objective remains to minimize the rising infant mortality rate per 1,000 live births from 74 in 1998 to 63 by the year 2005. Closely linked to this objective is the reduction of maternal mortality from 590 per 100,000 births in 1998 to 230 by the year 2005. The prevalence of HIV/AIDS has also had a great impact on life expectancy, about which the Government is concerned. Life expectancy for both men and women will have declined from 58 in 1995 to 53 by the year 2005.

On the positive side, we have witnessed the translation of our population policy into a higher contraceptive prevalence rate among women, for all methods, from 33 per cent in 1993 to 39 per cent in 1998. It is expected to rise to 53 per cent by the year 2005. We also take pride in having reduced both the fertility rate and the population growth rate to 4.7 and 2.2 per cent respectively.

With the advent of cost-sharing in the provision of services, the most vulnerable sectors have been those of health and social services. In terms of health, the Government is committed to the goal of full immunization by the year 2010. Despite the economic constraints, we are determined to ensure the expansion and improvement of health services for all Kenyans.

As the level of poverty rises, the education sector is greatly affected. Literacy levels are declining, particularly for girls. Under article 28 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, parties are to undertake to make primary education compulsory, available and free to all. However, in reality we are further from this goal today than we were at the time the World Summit on Social Development was held. In Kenya, public-sector spending on education stands at approximately 4.7 per cent of gross domestic product, with a further 4.5 per cent from the private sector. Cost-sharing by parents for building funds, book purchases and fees for extra-curricular activities is the order of the day. In this environment, the ability of the poorer segments of society to gain access to basic education is compromised and the socio-economic gap widens, with its inherent

consequences. In this regard, we look forward to continued close cooperation with our development partners.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. George Saliba, Chairman of the delegation of Malta.

Mr. Saliba (Malta): My Government attaches special importance to the implementation of the Cairo Programme of Action, which it considers to be an important step forward in the achievement of holistic social and economic development centred on respect for every individual's needs.

Five years after the adoption of the Cairo Programme of Action, considerable progress has been made in its implementation. However, more needs to be done to address the well-being of human beings and to achieve sustainable development. In this respect, the Government of Malta believes that the outcome of the Conference should not be dealt with in isolation. Cross-cutting issues and commitments, such as those emanating from the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), and in particular Agenda 21, are to be addressed at the national and international levels in a comprehensive manner by taking into account social needs, economic growth and environmental concerns.

It is our position that the implementation of the Cairo Programme of Action should be addressed by every sovereign State in accordance with its national laws, development needs and concerns, and the ethical, religious and cultural background of its people.

There is no doubt that the increase in the world's population in recent decades and its concentration in urban areas have led to unprecedented pressures on and the deterioration of the physical environment. This issue of the relationship between environmental capacity and population growth needs to be addressed urgently and in an integrated manner. A way out is the adoption of an integrated management strategy in which all factors are taken into account when formulating plans and policies for sustainable development.

One of the major concerns in population trends is the fact that unprecedented longevity is now affecting the populations of most developing countries and that this phenomenon is expected to accelerate rapidly during the next two decades. In this respect, major challenges face not only developing countries, but also developed ones, and demographic ageing will manifest itself in growth in the cost of old-age pensions, medical care and assistance in daily needs.

The President took the Chair.

Within this context, and understanding the emphasis of the fundamental objectives of the Programme of Action, Malta held in May 1998 the Seventh Conference of European Ministers responsible for social security under the theme "Social Security and its Transition into the Twenty-First Century". This Conference dealt with developments in the role and responsibility of systems and actors in the social field, both public and private, and in particular the coordinating role of the State with regard to the various actors in the field and the implementation of social security policy.

Although, due to high fertility rates, the actual percentage of elderly persons in the population is only about 6 per cent, their numbers in most developing countries will more than double in the next 20 years. The Government of Malta believes that, while research and the collection of data in developing countries are vital, an even more important requirement is training. This training should cover both the areas of demography as well as social gerontology.

The United Nations International Institute on Ageing, hosted by Malta, has for the past 11 years, with the assistance of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and with a major contribution from the Government of Malta, provided such training to personnel from developing countries all over the world. The Institute is now moving into the second phase of its training strategy by organizing on-site regional and national courses. In fact, the Institute has no less than 12 courses scheduled for this year. In view of the greatly increased demands for training from developing countries in this area, the Government of Malta calls for further contributions to this unique international effort.

Although the number of people in Malta living below the acceptable national standard of living is about 1 per cent of the population, the Government continues to give special importance to social services and, within the constraints of a small island economy, social welfare programmes now provide an adequate safety net even for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged. In fact, the implementation of social and economic measures has always been the backbone of the Maltese Government's policies. Suffice it to state that more than half of the

Government's expenditure is directed towards health, education and social welfare. Free medical care and education, elaborate social security and welfare provisions, and economic development have resulted in a more than satisfactory population development, which enables every individual to enjoy a fruitful and satisfactory life.

Education in Malta, spanning pre-grade to University, is freely available to all. Moreover, a stipend system for tertiary education is in place to provide for the needs of students and promote the continuation of their studies. Here, one needs also to underscore the fact that female students constitute roughly 50 per cent of the University's population. Special attention has also been given to students with special needs and lifelong education programmes, including a University of the Third Age, have also been established.

In the past 30 years or so, Malta has experienced a decrease in fertility rates. This is attributed to the general education and changed role of women, who have become fully participant in family decision-making and have increasingly taken job opportunities outside their homes. This change in fertility rates was not induced by direct state intervention, but by an enhanced role for women, equal opportunities for girls at schools and beyond, and the general social development of women.

The delegation of Malta reserves its position with respect to those terms included in the documents which could be interpreted as going against the position held by Malta, consistent with its national legislation, which considers the termination of pregnancy through induced abortion to be illegal.

We have also ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, amended family law to fully respect and reflect gender equality, and implemented a series of socio-economic and educational measures to empower women to achieve their full potential and become increasingly and fully involved in policy and decision-making processes at all levels of our society.

It is the conviction of Malta that it must keep on working on the basis outlined in the Cairo Programme of Action and in accordance with the prevalent ethical and cultural values of Maltese society, as reflected in national legislation, so that, together with the international community, we may promote a decent and fulfilling life for every single human being on our planet and for future generations.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to Her Excellency Ms. Valentine Leskaj, Executive Director of the Family Planning Association of Albania.

Ms. Leskaj (Albania): In 1994, Albania was one of the countries that endorsed the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) held in Cairo. Through this process, the Albanian Government committed itself to adopting a new population policy.

Since ICPD and ICPD+5, some important legislative and policy progress has been made in Albania, including a pregnancy interruption law approved in December 1995. Some other changes have occurred. An environmental protection law, a law on migration and a national strategy on women were recently approved by the Government. This process continues through our search for means to finalize new laws, such as those relating to non-governmental organizations and a family code, that can affect and influence the reproductive health situation and the entire population.

Albania has already achieved ICPD goals in the area of infant and maternal mortality and is looking for further reductions and to improve the reproductive health and population situation as a whole. The Government is currently working on health and welfare reform and there is political commitment to developing multiple comprehensive approaches and strategies in population issues, including reproductive health, which has been difficult to realize because of the situation as a whole. In 1998, the Ministry of Health, with the support of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), started a national programme on reproductive health. This programme will develop a national strategy in that field and coordinate the development of an international economic cooperation strategy.

The Albanian Government is also engaged in achieving gender balance. A national committee on women was established last year and a national strategy for women has been developed and approved by the Government. Special attention is being given to women's empowerment.

The changes that took place between 1991 and 1998 have been reflected in every aspect of the Albanian population. Migration — both emigration and the very rapid process of urbanization — has had a negative effect on the reproductive health and choices of the population. Some 15 per cent of the country's population is

emigrating. These people have very low status in the countries to which they emigrate and experience many economic, cultural and linguistic difficulties. They have little access to information and services. Cases of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases are growing rapidly, thus creating health risks for Albania as well as for the host countries. The development of special programmes for these individuals is much needed. At the same time, urbanization has been accompanied by very serious problems in education, sanitation, water supply, health and social services for the population. The living standards and health situation of that group is thus getting worse.

The reproductive health needs of women and violence against women as a result of emergency situations, as well as other population problems, have become evident in Albania as a result of the arrival of Kosovar refugees. We are giving greater attention to ensuring that Kosovar refugees, in particular women and young people, receive appropriate health care, including sexual and reproductive health care, emergency contraception and appropriate and timely information.

The age structure of the population of Albania clearly reflects the number of young people in the population. In 1997, 41.7 per cent of the population was under the age of 17. This is reflected in the high demand for reproductive health services. Although there are no legal barriers to adolescents receiving reproductive health services and information, economic, social and cultural barriers still limit such services. However, success has been achieved in the last five years. This includes the fact that there is now a much more open and approving attitude towards issues relating to sexual and reproductive health, including family planning, in Albania, a country in which family planning was taboo before 1992 due to the very strict pro-birth approach of the previous regime. After the Cairo Conference, Albania took the very beneficial step of introducing sex education in schools. However, implementation is mainly left to the discretion of individual schools.

Non-governmental organizations and the private sector are very new in Albania. Civil society is still building up slowly. The Government now has a more open attitude to groups from civil society and, in particular, to non-governmental organizations. Although there have been many positive changes concerning the role and responsibilities of civil society and partnerships with Government, there is still much to be done. Non-governmental organizations must be given greater space and opportunities to represent individual needs at the local and national levels. Frequent changes of Government mean that non-governmental organizations provide stability and continuity, which play a vital role in moving forward the ICPD Programme of Action. After the assessment, in ICPD+5, of what has been done, we believe that taking real action will require more in terms of the development of civil society. Different approaches could be used for creating appropriate environments for broadening partnerships and building trust, building coalitions, increasing the capacity of non-governmental organizations and being creative in promoting full access to reproductive health services.

The transition period has created a difficult situation for the country's economy. The consequences have been reflected in drastic increases in unemployment and inflation and also in the budget deficit. The biggest barrier to equal and universal access to reproductive health services in Albania is resource allocation. We recognize that lack of domestic and international funds for reproductive health programmes remains a huge problem and one that often makes a sustainable programme a wish rather than a reality.

The Albanian Government wishes to express its commitment to fulfilling its obligations and making the Cairo Programme of Action a reality in all its aspects.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I call on His Excellency Mr. Čalovski, chairman of the delegation of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

Mr. Čalovski (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia): The delegation of the Republic of Macedonia is pleased to see you, Sir, presiding over the General Assembly at its twenty-first special session. I am sure that under your leadership the Assembly will conclude its work successfully.

The views of the Republic of Macedonia coincide with those expressed by the representatives of Germany and of Finland speaking on behalf of the European Union.

The Republic of Macedonia actively participated in the International Conference on Population and Development held in Cairo in 1994; it held one of the Vice-President posts. The Programme of Action of the Cairo International Conference was an important event and a successful United Nations undertaking, with long-term effects on the population and on the development

policies and measures of Governments and of civil societies at both international and national levels. It represented a new look and an important advance in the understanding of current demographic developments and trends, of sustainable development and of the role and the situation of all parts of the population — grown-ups, the elderly, youth, children, women and men.

The most important result of the Cairo Conference was the adoption of the Programme by consensus, which made it an implementable and serious commitment. The implementation of the commitments undertaken in the Cairo Programme would immensely help and enable all of us to pursue development, democracy, justice, human rights, non-discrimination, gender equality and the observance of the principles and purposes of the Charter of our Organization.

We fully share the Secretary-General's view, expressed in this forum at the 1st meeting, that "Cairo was not just a population conference". As he said,

> "All States now understand that if they are to provide adequately for the future health and education of their citizens, they need to incorporate population policies into their development strategy."

We also agree with his negative answer to the question of whether we have done all that the Cairo Conference recommended. It is correct to state, therefore, that there is no need to rewrite the Cairo Programme of Action.

The adoption by the General Assembly at this twenty-first special session of the final document on the implementation of the Cairo Programme of Action should enhance the resolve of the international community, as well as of all countries and civil societies, to do more in the future. Of course, the implementation of the commitments and actions will vary from region to region and from country to country, depending on the actual political, economic and social situation of the particular region or country. What we all have in common is the wish and the request of peoples to have a better standard of living than they had in the past, real sustainable development and sustained growth in their countries and for their human rights and freedoms to be fully protected and observed.

At this point I would like to express our great appreciation to Mrs. Sadik and Ambassador Chowdhury for their inspiring dedication, for their excellent, untiring and fruitful work in the preparation of this special session and for the results of this work.

The Republic of Macedonia at present is preoccupied not only with issues such as gender equality, equity and empowerment of women and reproductive rights and reproductive health, but also with topical issues such as the return of the Kosovo refugees to their homes and the negative consequences of the Kosovo conflict for our country and for our region, and with the reconstruction of our region after the Kosovo war. The result of this preoccupation and these efforts will directly effect the livelihood of our population in the immediate present and in the future. It is estimated that the losses of the Republic of Macedonia as a result of the Kosovo conflict amount to several billion dollars. This is the third time since 1991 that, due to the actions of others, the Republic of Macedonia has incurred such huge losses. Regrettably, we have received no compensation or serious foreign aid so far. However, we expect that, as a result of the present international activities — first, on the basis of the recently adopted Stability Pact on South-eastern Europe — the response of the international community will be forthcoming.

The priority of the Republic of Macedonia is to see that the Kosovo war is the last one in the Balkans. In the twentieth century, in our region we have had eight wars, of which four took place during the last decade. We are optimistic for the future because the idea of creating greater States has been finally defeated and the goal of making our region one of democracy, stability, development of good-neighbourly relations and sustainable development has prevailed.

In order to make this a reality the process of integrating the Balkan States into the European Union should be accelerated, through bold actions by the European Union and by each Balkan State individually. There should be no more hesitation in the effort to quickly Europeanize the Balkans, which, as we all know, once were the centre of European civilization.

The Republic of Macedonia is a landlocked country situated in the very central part of the Balkan peninsula, covering an area of more than 25,000 square kilometres. According to the 1994 census, it has about 2 million inhabitants, out of which 66.7 per cent are Macedonians and the rest minorities. Of these minorities, the largest is the ethnic Albanians, who make up 22.9 per cent of the population, followed by the ethnic Turks at 4 per cent, the Roma 2.3 per cent, the Serbs 2 per cent, the Vlachs 0.4 per cent, undecided 0.1 per cent, and others 1.8 per cent. These last include Muslims, 0.8 per cent; Bosnians,

0.4 per cent; Egyptians, 0.2 per cent; Montenegrins 0.1 per cent; Croats, 0.1 per cent; and so on.

The average age of our population is 32.7 years for men and 33.9 for women. The average life expectancy for men is 70.1 and for women 74.4 years. Infant mortality is 4.8. The urban population makes up about 58 per cent of the total, while the rural makes up 42 per cent. The natality rate of the Macedonians is 3.8, of the ethnic Albanians 19.9, of the Turks 14.3, of the Roma 22.2. It is estimated that the total population will increase 14.5 per cent in the next 25 years. The percentage of the population that is elderly will increase from the present 8.5 per cent to 13 per cent; the percentage that is young — under 14 years old — will decrease from the present 24.8 per cent to 19.5 per cent.

The demographic policy of my Government pays particular attention to the call for the reduction of maternal mortality, strengthening the family-planning process, strengthening health and sex education, stronger actions in the field of HIV/AIDS, addressing the problems of adolescents, the ageing population, the migration problems and so on. We hope we will be able to enjoy better results in the future. The education of girls in this respect is of immense importance.

The highest priority of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia is the employment of its population. At present about 40 per cent of the working population is not employed. Another priority is the education of our youth, the good health of our people and a healthy environment. Although faced with so many difficulties — most of them due to external factors, as I indicated earlier — the results of our endeavours are encouraging. It is widely known that the Macedonian population is a hard-working, healthy and educated one.

We are pleased to note the finding of the report of the Secretary-General contained in document E/CN.9/1999/PC/4 that the implementation of the Cairo Programme is "off to a good start". However, we are concerned with his conclusions that official development assistance is declining; that international population assistance is "levelling off"; and that, in particular, in order to achieve better results in the implementation of the Cairo Programme "a number of financial, institutional and human resource constraints must be overcome". We agree that, in order to better implement the Cairo Programme and the final document of this special session, great political will and commitment are required. We would like to hope that these will not be lacking.

This century was a century of wars and destruction, but at the same time one of advancement of science and technology, as well as advancement in many other areas of human activity. The population all over the world has been faced with all kinds of difficulties and unfortunate situations, but it has not lost its humanness and its will to build a better future. The world will enter the twenty-first century with more than 6 billion people. A large number of them are living in poverty and in conflict situations and are unemployed, their living conditions falling short of basic standards. Many have poor health facilities, poor education and so on. To change that situation and make it a better one, national and international policies and measures are required. In this the work of the United Nations is essential. The twenty-first special session of the General Assembly is an appropriate means to direct national and international efforts towards that desired goal, so that the population all over the world can really have a better life in the twenty-first century and so that human solidarity can prevail.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now call on the chairman of the delegation of Honduras, Mr. Orellana Mercado.

Mr. Orellana Mercado (Honduras) (*spoke in Spanish*): In the final decades of this millennium the United Nations convened a series of world conferences with the shared theme of sustainable development; their conclusions define strategies for achieving justice and a higher level of well-being for all people. The Republic of Honduras has taken up the challenge of implementing those conclusions in an expeditious, active and concrete way.

On the theme before us today, population and development, the Government of the President Carlos Roberto Flores has adopted a practical, dynamic policy reflected in his Administration's agenda, which is closely linked with population issues. Here, accelerating population growth and urbanization pose a major challenge that must be addressed in the development process. My Government's development programme clearly reflects the unambiguous commitments of Honduras with respect to the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development; it proposes to improve the living conditions and health of the Honduran population with a view to eliminating avoidable problems and reducing the unnecessary differences that result from health problems.

At present, the Government of Honduras, with the support of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), is making a special effort qualitatively to improve the human resources devoted to reproductive health by training personnel working in the poorest areas of the country. In 1998 the Ministry of Health revised the norms for comprehensive care, including pregnancy, birth, post-natal care, family planning, adolescence, pre-menopause and menopause. The Health Department promulgated its Accord No. 966, which decreed that voluntary, preventive surgical contraceptive measures constitute an important element of maternal and child health. We have also reaffirmed that individuals should have the right to decide how many children they wish to have, and when and at what intervals they wish to have them.

As part of the effort to modernize the health sector, and with the cooperation of international bodies, we have set up counselling facilities on sexually transmitted diseases and AIDS, modern contraceptive techniques, the prevention and treatment of violence against women, participation of men in family planning programmes, gender mainstreaming and family counselling. My country has made great efforts to formulate comprehensive norms for women, focused on the broad range of reproductive health issues: adolescence, menopause and pre-menopause, increased availability of family planning, and an easing of regulations that limit women's access to permanent methods of family planning. To meet the reproductive-health needs of adolescents, we have formulated a programme of comprehensive care for adolescents, adopted a childhood and adolescence code, and launched a programme of clinics to care for pregnant adolescents.

The problem of HIV/AIDS is of prime importance in the policy of the Government of Honduras, and the focus of reproductive rights and of attention to priority vulnerable population groups is therefore principally on promoting low-risk behaviour, through a sustained and systematic information and education campaign, and through increased medical, counselling, hospital and laboratory services for sexually transmitted diseases and AIDS. In this field there have been both State activities and activities by non-governmental organizations, many of which are exclusively focused on this issue; this has brought about the creation of mechanisms for public-private coordination. With 18 years of experience in fighting this epidemic, my country now has valuable knowledge and increased awareness among the population with respect to the need for comprehensive activities and proposals in areas such as sexuality, adolescence, parent-child relationships and so forth.

Promoting healthy and responsible behaviour in the sphere of sexual and reproductive health requires profound cultural change, and the Government therefore considers it important to incorporate population issues into curricula at all levels of the national education system. The Ministry of Education has been making special efforts in this regard, as more recently has the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Honduras. In the medium term, we hope that all people will be able to exercise their sexual and reproductive rights with a sense of responsibility, awareness and community spirit; that gender equality and equity will become an everyday reality in every sphere of the life of the nation; and that population dynamics will be adjusted to the requirements of sustainable development.

There is political will in Honduras to continue to make sustained progress in implementing the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, so that all its objectives can be reached and surpassed as soon as possible. This accords with the highest national interests of the entire population, especially its poorest members, who live in the country and in the marginal areas of our cities. My country views attaining the Cairo objectives not only as an aspiration to social progress but first and foremost also as an ethical imperative for the well-being of all.

But our national capacity to respond to the challenge of meeting the Cairo objectives has been violently affected by the enormous impact of hurricane Mitch on our economy. A good part of the resources of Honduras must now be allocated to rebuilding the agricultural infrastructure and the communication network. We must be able to rely on international technical and financial cooperation and on the easing of our foreign debt burden if we are to transform the country and make it less vulnerable to the onslaughts of nature and the effects of poverty.

Honduras must be able to rely on international cooperation to extend reproductive health education and services to the most vulnerable social groups, including women heads of household, rural women, and adolescents. It also needs resources to achieve the complete elimination of stereotypes and to change the social structures that make it impossible to attain complete gender equality and equity. It also needs international support to continue training people in the area of population, with a view to improving the quality of programmes and extending the range of services in keeping with the reproductive health guidelines set out in

the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Jackeo Relang, Chairman of the delegation of the Marshall Islands.

Mr. Relang (Marshall Islands): It is my honour to bring greetings — *iakwe* — from the President of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, His Excellency The Honourable Imata Kabua.

My Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade, His Excellency The Honourable Phillip Muller, was unable to lead the Marshall Islands delegation owing to pressing and urgent commitments at home. I take this opportunity to convey his sincere apologies and his wishes for a successful outcome of this special session. The Marshall Islands Government pledges its support for and commitment to the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and of the recommendations of this special session.

Prior to the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo, Egypt, in September 1994, the Government of the Republic of the Marshall Islands was greatly concerned about its rapidly growing population and the health, social and economic consequences associated with a rapidly growing population, especially to a small island developing State.

The Republic of the Marshall Islands was one of the 179 countries that fully supported and approved the ICPD Programme of Action in Cairo and has continued to strongly support the goals and objectives of the Programme. We are committed to its implementation at the national level, even though our resources are scarce.

One of the best examples of the Marshall Islands Government's strong support and commitment to the Programme of Action is the establishment of the National Population Council in 1994, with members from the various ministries and agencies of the Government, as well as representatives from religious and local groups and non-governmental organizations. This Council was tasked with the responsibility of formulating and implementing a national population and development policy. In response, the Council has begun to address the issues and health, social, environmental and economic ramifications associated with a rapidly growing population.

As a result of the work of the Council, a National Population and Development Policy was adopted in 1995. One of the issues addressed in the policy is primary health care. A cornerstone of our primary care services is individual and community involvement in health-care service delivery, including public health, maternal reproductive health, family planning and sexual health. Community Health Councils have been established, promoting health and creating outreach activities aimed at and encouraging community participation and ownership.

In 1997, the Marshall Islands Government drafted a Five-Year Population and Development Action Plan to further strengthen and implement the Population and Development Policy and to incorporate the population strategies into the development planning process to achieve sustainable economic and social development. Long-term objectives include reducing the rate of population growth to a level compatible with the country's resource base and potential; improving the societal status of women; and lowering the fertility, morbidity and mortality rates. Short-term objectives include improving the quality of education; increasing environmental awareness; improving nutritional awareness and promoting behavioural changes in relation to diet and lifestyles; reducing teen pregnancies; creating greater awareness of population-related issues; improving access to family-planning services; upgrading the skills of the labour force and increasing women's participation in the labour force.

The main issues affecting women in the Marshall Islands include the comparatively low participation of women in paid employment; a high rate of attrition among school-age girls; teen pregnancies; and a high rate of malnutrition, anaemia and iron deficiency among women. The Government established the Office of Women's Affairs and tasked it with coordinating all government activities concerning women and development.

Cultural barriers and taboos have prevented women from seeking reproductive and sexual health and family planning services due to the availability of exclusively male health-care providers. Recognizing this limitation, the Government recently completed its first training of female health assistants, thereby reducing the barriers for women to receive much needed health-care services.

Adolescents and young adults make up a large segment of the population of the Marshall Islands and

require special preventative health-care needs and education. The Government has established a National Youth Council with overall responsibility. Assisting this Council is a non-profit community-based organization, Youth to Youth in Health, which, in partnership with the Health Services Division of the Ministry of Health and Environment, has successfully been providing reproductive health and clinic services and youth peer education for the past several years to both urban and rural populations throughout the Marshall Islands. Youth to Youth in Health has encouraged hundreds of young people to become role models, providing hope to youth at high risk for such things as teen pregnancy, suicide, substance abuse, sexually transmitted diseases and AIDS, emphasizing health awareness, leadership skills and cultural appreciation through music and drama. Currently, this non-governmental organization is interested in seeking support for an enhanced project for youth health services. Details are available through the Marshall Islands Permanent Mission to the United Nations.

As I have mentioned, the Marshall Islands are fully aware of the linkages between the major international agreements reached since the Rio Conference. The linkages are there at the international level, but we can also clearly see the connections at the national level. We have sought to make the implementation of the population policies compatible with other sustainable development efforts. As part of the process of listening to the people and seeking to address their needs, the Government has decided to hold another national economic and social summit.

The summit will draw together all interested citizens and government officials. Our intention is to further build on a national consensus for sustainable development and to seek views on what sorts of projects could be implemented in the Marshall Islands with private sector and non-governmental organization involvement. We are seeking from the summit an endorsement of the revitalized National Commission on Sustainable Development, which would have broad participation. This would assist us in taking on board the priorities of the Barbados, Copenhagen and ICPD Programmes of Action, as well as other international issues, and in incorporating these into the individual Ministries' and agencies' work plans. We also seek to bring all these activities together under the auspices of a national, centrally coordinated body with the full involvement of the communities in the Marshall Islands.

This clearly shows how we intend to move forward in our future efforts and that we are serious about seeking to complement social and economic policy with sustainable development initiatives. A concrete proposal which we are currently pursuing is the idea that the outer island health centres should have solar-power electricity. This would give us savings in fuel oil and be a much more sustainable basis for assisting us in maintaining these efforts. Clearly, international support will be needed and we count on the interested donor Governments to bear our concerns in mind.

The initiatives of the Republic of the Marshall Islands aimed at implementing national population and development goals have been numerous. However, there remain many challenges. The ability to strengthen the capacities of human resources and to implement new programmes is limited only by resource availability. Currently, such international organizations as the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Health Organization (WHO) are the major funding sources for implementing population programmes and projects. Others, like the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), could do much more in the Pacific island countries.

Reduced budget allocations have required the Marshall Islands Government to seek additional assistance from bilateral and multilateral sources, for which we are grateful. But these sources are also on the decline, particularly for small island developing States like the Marshall Islands. In order to try to complement these declining resources, my delegation attaches great importance to promoting international cooperation through a collaboration of resources, such as the South-South initiatives. Initiatives at the regional level, such as those for the Pacific island countries, could be a most beneficial and cost-effective use of scarce funds. The Marshall Islands have taken steps to ensure the successful domestic implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action and will continue to advocate support from national, regional and international leaders so that the Programme may become a successful reality.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Mohamed Al-Sindi, chairman of the delegation of Yemen.

Mr. Al-Sindi (Yemen) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, the Republic of Yemen would like to congratulate you, Sir, and express its pleasure at seeing you preside over the work of the General Assembly at this special session. We would also like to take this opportunity to

extend our congratulations to the other members of the Bureau and wish them every success in their work.

The world is now facing many interdependent and interrelated challenges. The population problem constitutes a major challenge which has many dangerous and burdensome ramifications affecting all sectors of society, especially in developing countries. The least developed countries in particular are suffering from very rapid demographic growth, which weighs heavily on their economies and constitutes a weighty burden and has long-term negative effects on their societies and environment. Our countries are trying, to the best of their abilities and in conformity with their cultures, values and traditions, as well as in the context of their specific social, economic and political situations, to exert their utmost efforts in order to reinvigorate and promote economic, social and cultural development in a way that will allow the effective participation of citizens in the life and development of their community, at present and in the future, on the basis of justice, equality, equal opportunities for all and the genuine exercise of democracy so as to preserve individuals' freedoms and rights and make it possible for them to participate in an active way in the life of society.

Like other least developed countries, Yemen is facing many difficult and dangerous problems, burdens, and challenges in terms of demography and development. Within the context of our humble means, we have attempted to adjust our development programmes to our national priorities by providing education, health, housing, employment, nutrition and public services to improve the lives of our people. The first statement made by the Government of the Republic of Yemen after its reunification was to reassert that its citizens were its main concern, and the good of its development.

On that basis, we established a National Council for Population Issues, presided over by the Prime Minister. His job is to implement population policies and programmes on the basis of four major elements: first, improving public health, particularly that of mothers and children, and expanding family-planning services; secondly, strengthening human resources and promoting comprehensive and sustainable development through effective means and methods; thirdly, improving the economic development machinery to as to attain demographic objectives; and, fourthly, strengthening the institutional, legislative, media environment, and relevant scientific research apparatus and procedures. That is also the reason why we established two specialized offices within the Ministry of Health, one being in charge of reproductive health and family planning, and the other in charge of women's health. They form part of the secretariat of the National Council for Population Issues, and their goal is to establish strategies on women and to enable women to participate in the development process.

In June 1999, the National Council set up a permanent committee on demographic and development issues. Our Government is fully aware of population issues and their impact on economic and social sectors. That why we have undertaken to implement many programmes affiliated with this demographic policy on the basis of an updated plan of action for demographic issues. Clearly, we are undertaking these measures in accordance with our own domestic financial means, and with international assistance, including assistance from the United Nations Population Fund and from other donors. However, this support does not achieve our goals nor does it reach the minimum levels required for such programmes. In 1996, the World Bank set a figure of $2.1 billion which it said would be necessary if we were to meet all the various challenges in the fields of health and population by the year 2020.

Within the context of the national population strategy, the Government has adopted programmes for mothers and children and for family planning. All executive bodies, whether governmental or non-governmental organizations, participate in these programmes, which look at the issue of reproductive health as a whole. The secretariat of the National Council for Population Issues coordinates its actions with those of non-governmental organizations, which are our partners in implementing the goals of population policies. There are also programmes and projects to alert the population to demographic issues in many sectors.

My country has undertaken to attain the objectives set at the 1994 Cairo Conference within the context of our national population strategy and with a revised plan of action, in accordance with the specifics of Yemeni experience in this field and with religious tradition and customs.

In cooperation with an American national agency we have hosted an international seminar on emerging democracies and on economic reform in the world. This seminar was opened by Ali Abdullah Saleh, President of the Republic of Yemen, and had the goal of enhancing effective participation and thus strengthening the democratic regime and supporting international efforts to strengthen democracies and reform in spite of their

economic problems. We hope to see established a dialogue among democracies, so as to have an exchange of information and expertise which would not conflict with the circumstances of each country.

In conclusion, I would like to express the thanks and gratitude of my Government to Mr. Kofi Annan for his efforts, made through the United Nations Population Fund, in the field of population, and to thank Mrs. Nafis Sadik, the Executive Director of the Fund, who in May 1999 visited our country in order to observe the level of progress in attaining population objectives. I would also like to thank all the funds, programmes and Governments — in particular the Dutch and German Governments, as well as all States participating in the various programmes for our country's development efforts.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now call on Mr. Ali Fahad Faleh Al-Hajri, chairman of the delegation of Qatar.

Mr. Al-Hajri (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of the delegation of Qatar let me first congratulate the President on his election to the presidency of the special session of the General Assembly. I would also like to thank Mrs. Nafis Sadik, the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund, as well as the honourable members of the Bureau for the important work that they have done. I would also like to express our th. nks and gratitude to the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for the report that he has presented at this session and which describes the efforts that have been made since the holding of the Cairo Conference in 1994.

Reading the report, we realize the importance and the need of greater efforts, concerted efforts, in order to reach the goals and objectives of that Conference, because — in spite of certain positive results in certain fields — we note disparities and manifest imbalances between the results in developing and developed countries. It suffices to look at the distribution of population throughout the world to see the great danger that continues to threaten the efforts of a great number of States in the field of development. The population of the world is close to 6 billion and increases by 78 million every year, and four-fifths of the world's population lives in the least developed areas of the world. This reveals the flagrant imbalance which demands increased efforts and a more effective contribution on the part of developed countries in support of developing countries. Poverty, wars, debt and debt service, along with demographic pressures, are obstacles to these countries' development. Therefore we believe it is necessary to make the developing States eligible for integration into the global economic system. Developed countries must shoulder greater responsibility in this regard, supporting ambitious programmes in collaboration with the United Nations in order to achieve the required goals and facilitate the smooth transfer of technology which developing societies need so that we may all reach the new millennium in harmony.

On the national level the State of Qatar has continued its intensive efforts in order to guarantee a better future for its citizens, despite the drop in the price of oil — the main resource of the State. Qatar has pursued the implementation of ambitious plans in the field of investment in gas, which we hope will be a source of national revenue and create new job opportunities for future generations.

Here I would like to pay tribute to the efforts of the Government in the fields of education, health, and economic and social development. The Government is fully aware of the need and the importance of family as the core of society. That is why the State and the Emir give particular attention to this point by providing all levels of society with proper housing, either free of charge or by below-cost instalment payments, and by furnishing jobs to heads of households and all members of the family who are able to work, without discriminating at all between men and women. The State has also provided health care free of charge to all members of the family and gives particular attention to mothers and children and even to non-citizen residents. Particular attention is also given to education. Education is free for all — men and women — at all levels, from the primary to the university and post-university levels. The State has also created night schools for those who cannot attend classes during the day and has created literacy centres in order to eliminate illiteracy altogether.

The State has not neglected the elderly, who need to be respected by the society and not pitied. There are specialized medical centres and social services which benefit them. Special efforts have been made to take care of their special needs and to make it possible for them to live with their families. Nor has the State neglected handicapped people who have specific needs. It has made efforts to mainstream them and to take advantage of their potential so that they may have self-respect and the respect of the society.

As regards family, His Royal Highness, the Emir, has adopted a decree establishing the High Council for

Family Affairs to be headed by Her Royal Highness, his spouse, which will give special attention to family and its role in society. Programmes have been established to support the development of needy families so that they may become self-sufficient and so that they may be able to find sources of income. The State has also issued a variety of laws and embarked upon versions projects in the social and economic areas, which time would not allow to enumerate.

I cannot mention here all the laws relative to economic and social matters. We are proud to recognize the role that the private sector is playing, in association with the public sector, in development and in promoting a better future for all citizens.

The State of Qatar continues to take full account of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, and wishes to reaffirm the Programme's acknowledgment that implementation of the recommendations of the Programme of Action is a matter for each sovereign State in line with its own national laws and development priorities and with full respect for its cultural, religious and ethical values, in accordance with universal norms and internationally recognized human rights.

In conclusion, we express our hope that the work of this session will be crowned with success, so that all mankind may see a better future and a freer, worthier and more dignified life.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): We shall now hear statements by Observer delegations.

I give the floor to His Excellency Archbishop Renato Martino, Chairman of the Observer delegation of the Holy See.

Archbishop Martino (Holy See): Allow me, Sir, on behalf of the delegation of the Holy See, to congratulate you and the other Assembly officers, and to thank Ambassador Anwarul Karim Chowdhury for his tireless efforts to bring success to this special session.

My delegation welcomes this opportunity to address the General Assembly at this special session devoted to overall review of the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD). It is hard to believe that the Cairo Conference took place five years ago. At the same time, with all that has taken place since the ICPD, it seems very long ago indeed.

The Holy See was able to join the consensus on parts of the Cairo document; it did so because, for the first time, development was linked with population as a major issue for discussion. At the same time, the Holy See called attention to those aspects of the Cairo Programme of Action that it recognized as being problematic. Many of those same issues continue to cause problems and concerns. One of the aspects that is of great concern is the realization that the negotiations in the preparatory process of the special session have taken a step backward, placing an unbalanced emphasis on population issues at the expense of development. Poverty reduction, access to basic social services, especially health care, education and security are the best tools for meeting the goals set at Cairo and bringing about sustainable development for all.

When the preparatory process began this past March, my delegation, being committed to General Assembly resolutions which directed us not to renegotiate the ICPD Programme of Action, looked forward to an opportunity to review lessons learned, best practices and possible future initiatives to serve an ever-changing world. Thus, the Holy See has found it particularly disconcerting that some delegations, mainly from Western States, have sought in these negotiations to undo the careful balancing needed between adolescents' need for privacy and confidentiality and parental rights, duties and responsibilities: parents' prior rights, as affirmed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

In the light of the current epidemic of violence amongst young people and the appropriate calls from those in highest places of authority for parents to assume their proper responsibilities for the actions of their children, the Holy See finds it particularly disturbing that some Western States would take away parental rights, duties and responsibilities on the one hand and require that parents exercise those responsibilities on the other.

The Holy See has also not failed to express its grave concern regarding the introduction of so-called emergency contraception, which can serve as an abortifacient by preventing the implantation of a fertilized human egg. The Holy See further notes with profound regret that in calling for expanded health services, including so-called safe abortion, the draft text presented to the Assembly has failed to affirm protection for the right of conscience of health providers, a fundamental human right affirmed by, *inter alia*, article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Holy See has never lost sight of the fact that the human person is

at the centre of development, and that everything that is accomplished at the United Nations must be aimed at strengthening and protecting that human-centredness.

As we draw ever closer to the dawn of the new millennium, humanity looks to the delegations represented here for guidance and direction. The people of the world deserve the very best that we can provide. They look also to the United Nations to set the stage for their future and that of their children and of future generations.

Now, during the review processes of the major United Nations conferences of the 1990s, it is evident that many of their goals have not yet been met, and that the United Nations still has a long way to go. In this process that is quickly coming to a conclusion, the Holy See participated in the preparatory meetings and took part in the discussions, and has already stated its objections to the document that will be presented to this Assembly and approved by it. This does not mean that the Holy See can simply walk away from the work begun at Cairo, the work proceeding here, and the work which will continue in the future. The Holy See will continue to work to reach the goals set at the Cairo, Copenhagen, Beijing and other international conferences. The Holy See will continue to call upon the family of nations to protect the dignity and human rights of each and every person, especially the most vulnerable, and to promote the common good.

The Holy See will continue its involvement in the work of the United Nations to help in finding answers, solving problems and sharing ideas on population and development. At the same time, as at the end of the Cairo Conference, I must state that nothing the Holy See has done in this process should be understood or interpreted as an endorsement of concepts it cannot endorse for moral reasons. Nothing is to be understood to imply that the Holy See endorses abortion or has in any way changed its moral position concerning abortion or contraceptives. The Holy See reaffirms its belief that life begins at conception and that every human life needs to be protected, from the earliest moment to the end of the life cycle.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Before we hear the remaining speakers, I should like to address the matter concerning the participation of non-governmental organizations in the plenary meetings of the twenty-first special session. Members will recall that at the 1st plenary meeting of the special session, the Assembly decided that, in view of time constraints, non-governmental organizations would make statements in the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole.

Members will also recall that the Commission on Population and Development acting as the preparatory committee for the twenty-first special session of the General Assembly, in decision II of its report to the twenty-first special session (document A/S-21/2), has recommended that, given availability of time and bearing in mind General Assembly decision 51/467 of 18 April 1997, a limited number of non-governmental organizations may also make statements in the debate in the plenary, subject to the approval of the special session.

In this connection, after having conducted the necessary consultations, especially with the Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations, it is proposed that the following three non-governmental organizations may make statements in the plenary: the International Planned Parenthood Federation, the International Right to Life Federation, and Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era.

If there is no objection, may I take it that the Assembly agrees that those three non-governmental organizations may make statements in the plenary?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Luigi Boselli, Chairman of the delegation for the European Commission on behalf of the European Union.

Mr. Boselli (European Commission): Following the statements of Germany and Finland on behalf of the European Union, I have the pleasure to address this special session of the General Assembly on behalf of the European Community (EC), which is also an essential component of the European Union.

I would like to thank Ambassador Chowdhury and the Secretariat for their exceptional work in guiding us all through the preparatory process and ensuring that this special session can indeed focus on the most important issues in the review and appraisal of progress towards meeting the objectives of the Programme of Action and the priorities for future actions. We would also like to pay special tribute to Mrs. Sadik and Mr. Chamie for their untiring work as global advocates for change over the last five years in taking forward the Cairo agenda.

We are dealing here with issues that go to the core of human rights as enshrined in the Universal Declaration

of Human Rights and the treaties of the European Union. We are addressing dignity, freedom and the equality of women and men. The European Community would like to take the opportunity of this special session to reaffirm its commitment to the important objectives agreed in Cairo and to state its support for the key priorities for future action that have been identified during this review process and outlined in the Secretary-General's report.

The five-year review has clearly highlighted that there has been good progress in many areas of sexual and reproductive health and that the national and international resources made available are making a difference. However, the review has also demonstrated that there is still a huge job to be done in advocacy, policy and strategy development and service provision in order to meet people's needs, especially in the poorest groups in society. A European Union round table on ICPD+5, held in January this year, provided an opportunity for representatives of Governments and civil society groups to exchange views. A number of important issues were raised. It was broadly agreed that we need to continue to ensure that our work on sexual and reproductive health is embedded in a human rights approach; that the language of Cairo still needs to be translated into the language of people in the street; that Governments and parliamentarians need to ensure that appropriate legislative and policy frameworks are in place; and that civil society groups have a very important role to play.

The European Community has committed over 700 million euros over the last five years in support of work related to population and sexual and reproductive health in developing countries. We will continue to support actions in developing countries to enable people — especially women and young people — to have access to information and services relevant to their sexual and reproductive health needs. Our support in Africa and the Caribbean, Latin America, Asia and the Mediterranean has grown and diversified steadily since the Cairo Conference. This is based on a variety of partnerships with Governments, the United Nations and a wide range of civil society groups.

While we are pleased to report that support has increased, we are also aware that much of the work is only just beginning. We are increasingly looking for high-quality partnerships to ensure that resources are used effectively and translated into improvements for the poor and marginalized sections of society.

The European Commission has identified five key areas for action. First is the need to maintain and increase the gains already made in developing integrated reproductive health programmes and in particular the provision of safe family-planning services. While this is one of the most encouraging areas of progress since Cairo, there are worrying trends in commodity supply and access to the poorest communities. There are still millions of people who do not use family-planning services, either because these do not exist or due to an inability to gain access.

Secondly, little progress has been made in reducing maternal deaths and ill-health due to complications in pregnancy or childbirth. This is an area where efforts have clearly failed poor and marginalized women, hundreds of thousands of whom are dying from preventable causes each year. The lack of appropriate primary care and effective referral services needs to be tackled urgently. In addition, the high levels of unwanted pregnancy and the use of unsafe abortion services by women, especially young women, need urgent action at the legislative, awareness-raising and service-provision levels.

Thirdly, the EC will continue its support to ensure that young people have good information and counselling about sexual and reproductive health; are guided through what is often a vulnerable period; are aware of their responsibilities; and are given access to appropriate services. This area, perhaps more than any other, has been highlighted as a priority during this review process.

Fourthly, another major problem recognized during this wide ranging review is that of HIV/AIDS. This pandemic has accelerated more than many predicted at the time of the Cairo Conference. The EC will continue to support a wide-ranging programme of work on HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases through operational research and the implementation of prevention and care interventions that have been shown to be effective.

Fifthly, the often hidden problems of domestic and gender-based violence, abuse and sexual exploitation that cause serious health problems and undermine the position of women need to be tackled. Moreover, we also need to give special attention to protecting refugee and displaced women from sexual violence.

Our conclusion is that the ICPD+5 review has demonstrated that, while progress is being made, there is still much to be done. It has allowed us the opportunity to renew our commitment to working on population,

sexual and reproductive health and sustainable development issues, especially to the benefit of the poorest. It has given us a rare opportunity to reflect upon our work over the last five years. It has allowed us to look more closely at our performance and, perhaps most importantly, set us some important new challenges for the coming years. The European Commission intends to play its part in implementing this new agenda through partnerships with Governments, donor and United Nations organizations and civil society groups.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to Mr. Peter Schatzer, Director, External Relations and Information Department of the International Organization for Migration.

Mr. Schatzer (International Organization for Migration): The International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Programme of Action, in particular chapter X, which deals with international migration, is a key instrument for planning and policy guidance for the work of the International Organization for Migration (IOM). My remarks today will focus on progress and obstacles in its implementation.

A central objective of chapter X is to encourage more cooperation and dialogue between countries of origin and countries of destination. In the five years since Cairo, regional and subregional intergovernmental dialogue on migration issues has greatly expanded around the globe. I should like to provide a few examples.

Since 1996, Governments in Central and North America, with our substantive and logistical support, have been holding regular regional consultations in what has become known as the Puebla process. This multilateral forum has strengthened communication and cooperation among the participating States and helped foster more orderly migration processes.

In East and South-East Asia, too, regional migration consultations have been set in motion. The Manila process brings together 17 countries for exchange of information on irregular migration and trafficking. The Asia-Pacific consultations focus on refugees, displacement and migration in a somewhat larger region. These regular exchanges at the working level have received new impetus and substance from a ministerial meeting on regional cooperation on irregular migration, which took place in Bangkok last April, hosted by the Royal Thai Government and generously supported by donor Governments and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). The Bangkok Declaration, adopted on that occasion, now serves as the confirmation of the political will of the region to deal with the complex matters of migration in a constructive and collaborative fashion.

With regard to the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and neighbouring countries, a United Nations conference convened in Geneva in 1996 to address the problems of refugees, displaced persons, other forms of involuntary displacement and returnees in the CIS region has led to a comprehensive technical cooperation programme aimed at establishing, improving and harmonizing national migration legislation, policies and administrative structures.

Similar consultation mechanisms are in preparation in other regions, including South America, the western Mediterranean and southern Africa, and IOM has offered its support for them, too. In fact, the desire to deal with migration issues through a constructive, multilateral dialogue has been a major factor contributing to our organization's rapid growth in recent years, bringing the number of IOM member and observer States to 117.

Despite such encouraging developments, advancing understanding of the complexities of migration remains a major challenge. To this end, the United Nations convened the Technical Symposium on International Migration and Development in The Hague one year ago as part of the ICPD+5 process. According to the findings of the Symposium, poverty, environmental degradation, the use of migrant remittances, the development potential of return migration, trafficking in migrants and irregular migration, as well as the fair treatment of asylum applications, remain key issues which need to be dealt with in constructive cooperation between countries of origin, transit and destination.

Indeed, around the globe, effective management of regular and irregular migration is a priority issue. Individual and collective responses by States are often hampered, however, by insufficient migration management capacity at national levels. Given these circumstances, in 1998 the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), IOM and UNFPA decided to launch a joint migration training and capacity-building programme. The first two courses have already taken place, one in Eastern Europe, hosted by Hungary, and the other in southern Africa, hosted by South Africa. Current plans foresee the next courses taking place in South-East Asia, Central Asia, East Africa and the Mediterranean region.

Growing numbers of women participate in international migration, both as family members and, increasingly, independently. They make up almost 50 per cent of the overall migration population. Women in conflict situations in particular are under threat of becoming victims of gender-specific violence. Their needs, including their overall and reproductive health needs, deserve far more attention than they currently receive.

For the potential migrant, an important element in deciding whether to remain at home or to leave is the availability of credible information about conditions in the target country. Misleading information and fraudulent promises often skew the decision to depart. Women and children in particular are preyed upon by traffickers, who often deliver them into prostitution and other forms of exploitation. New international legal instruments currently under negotiation in the United Nations Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice can be important tools in combating trafficking, as are programmes for the protection of victims and for their return and reintegration, as well as mass information campaigns developed to reach the individuals at risk before they migrate.

Unfortunately, in these and too many other instances, migrants' rights continue to be violated. Fortunately, however, such violations are receiving growing attention and publicity. In this context, the slow but steady growth since Cairo in the number of ratifications of the 1990 International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families testifies to an increasing awareness of the problem, spurring political will to heed the relevant recommendations in the ICPD Programme of Action.

The International Organization for Migration is committed to the principle that orderly migration can benefit both individuals and society. This is an ICPD message, too. Admittedly, there is no shortage of challenges in dealing with today's complex migration scene, even if the public does sometimes seem to focus only on the problem side. Yet one cannot lose sight of the fact that throughout history migrants have made, and continue to make, incontestable contributions to their countries of origin and destination. Working together from the blueprint sketched out at Cairo, States can continue to make progress, as, indeed, they have done to a significant degree since 1994, towards better managing migration and harnessing it as a positive force for social and economic development.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Werner Haug, chairman of the Observer delegation of Switzerland.

Mr. Haug (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): The Cairo Conference was one of a series of major United Nations conferences that took place during the 1990s which made it possible to obtain a wide consensus of support for sustainable human development. It marked a turning point in the debate and in the initiatives taken at international level on population issues. Like several other delegations, the Swiss delegation welcomed the results achieved five years ago in Cairo. Individuals — in particular, women — were no longer seen as objects but recognized as active subjects in development, endowed with rights and in command of their own destinies. Fortunately, that dimension of sustainable development can no longer be ignored.

Freed from narrow approaches which focus solely on contraception and family planning, population questions will become a central feature of human development strategies. Experience has shown that a broader approach based on improving the status of women and on promoting education, job creation and basic health, as well as reproductive and sexual rights and health, has a direct effect on the birth rate and on birth spacing.

The Cairo Programme of Action has been implemented in various regions and countries of the world at different speeds. These differences are due not only to the challenges of development, but also, very often, to cultural and religious factors related to sexuality, relationships between men and women and the respective roles of parents and of the State. Nevertheless, new concepts of health and of reproductive and sexual rights have become widespread and have begun to be applied in numerous countries.

With regard to financing, however, it is necessary to mention at this follow-up session to the Cairo Conference that the targets have been missed by a wide margin. We are well aware of the frustration of our partners in the developing countries. One of the main causes of this shortfall in financial resources is the general and worrying fall-off in official development assistance.

International cooperation provides Switzerland with a favourable environment in which to implement the Cairo Programme of Action. On the multilateral level,

more attention has been devoted to the priorities set out in the Programme of Action. This has translated into a reorientation and an increase of Swiss Government aid in these areas. The United Nations Population Fund, the World Health Organization, and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) are the main beneficiaries. On the bilateral level things are more complicated, because an integrated approach is not easy either to conceive or to implement. Those development programmes that Switzerland supports, particularly in the areas of health and education, are often still lacking in a gender-specific approach, and those in the areas of health often place too little emphasis on reproductive health.

Switzerland wants to continue and to strengthen its support for health and education programmes, to promote a balanced partnership between men and women, to reinforce the social dimension of development and to continue the fight against poverty. In this context, Switzerland attaches particular importance to the 20/20 Initiative.

In the future Switzerland plans to place special emphasis on the following aspects of its population and development policies: ensuring that a key dimension of each programme is the free choice on when to have or not to have a child, or to have no more children; combating unwanted pregnancies, unsafe abortions and maternal mortality; combating sexually transmitted diseases and the tragic HIV/AIDS epidemic; promoting education on safe sex; offering information and access to good quality reproductive health services, especially for adolescents; and, finally, combating violence against women — both physical and psychological violence, as well as certain traditional acts of violence such as genital mutilation.

These priorities naturally also constitute the essential elements of the implementation in Switzerland of the Programme of Action. The most difficult challenges confronting our society are, however, probably quite different. They include the ageing of the population, the contribution of migrants in a multicultural society, solidarity between the generations, full and genuine equality between men and women and changes in ways of thinking and living, in particular with regard to the family.

In spite of the difficulties of arriving at a consensus on all these points and the current disappointments, one encouraging aspect of this follow-up session to the Cairo Conference is that it clearly serves to refocus attention on the important issues of the Programme of Action and to remobilize the international community regarding these issues. The Swiss delegation is pleased at the evident will to persist in the commitment to development based on the dignity and the full flourishing of each human being.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now call on the chairman of the Observer delegation of the Organization of African Unity, His Excellency Mr. Amadou Kébé.

Mr. Kébé (Organization of African Unity) (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity, Salim Ahmed Salim, I have the great honour to take the floor before the Assembly. Mr. Salim wished to take part in this session, given the importance that Africa attaches to the demographic dimension of its development. Unfortunately, he was not able to do so because of certain last-minute obligations.

As has been made abundantly clear by the distinguished speakers who have preceded me, the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), held in Cairo in 1994, was a great landmark in the efforts of the international community to promote equitable economic and social development throughout the world. The present General Assembly special session, which was called in order to assess the progress made in the implementation of the recommendations contained in the Programme of Actior of the Cairo Conference, undoubtedly provides the international community with an exceptional opportunity to reflect on new strategies that are likely to allow the full implementation of the Programme of Action.

I would like to take this opportunity to reaffirm the commitment of Africa to the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action. We consider that sustainable development requires taking into account the demographic variables in the elaboration of development strategies, in socio-economic planning and in decision-making processes, including resource allocation decisions. This is why the African continent proposed the Kilimanjaro Programme of Action, which was adopted in Arusha during the Second African Population Conference. This Programme stresses that problems relating to population should be handled in the general context of the socio-economic development of Africa. Later, the Third African Population Conference, held in Dakar in December 1992, adopted the declaration of Dakar/Ngor, which points out the link between population and sustainable development in Africa.

Furthermore, reflecting the importance they attach to population problems, African heads of State or Government met at Tunis in July 1994 and adopted the Tunis Declaration on population and development in Africa, in which they endorsed the Dakar/Ngor Declaration on Population, Family and Sustainable Development and stressed, *inter alia*, the need to introduce more ambitious national demographic policies. They also called for the creation and strengthening of national institutions intended to find permanent solutions to problems of population and development and stressed the advancement of women and youth. The Tunis Declaration endorsed the establishment of the OAU Population Commission, whose purpose is, in collaboration with other institutions, to carry out population activities in Africa.

We recognize the complementarity of activities in the context both of Africa and of the ICPD, but we must now assess what we have achieved and consider what needs to be done to come closer to the goals we have set for ourselves.

On the basis of these declarations and the Programme of Action, Africa has taken important action over the past five years. In 1994, for example, it created the OAU Population Commission, which, with the support of the joint secretariat of the OAU, the Economic Commission for Africa and the African Development Bank, has been carrying out a wide-ranging advocacy campaign for the implementation of the Dakar/Ngor Declaration and the Cairo Programme of Action. The OAU Population Commission has had a real impact on problems of population and development in some African countries. In its work, the Commission enjoys the strong cooperation and support of the United Nations Population Fund. Moreover, the OAU has always given political support to priority consideration of population issues as part of the development programmes of its member States.

At the national level, many African countries have adopted a range of measures and have carried out reforms in their demographic and development policies. They have reassessed their institutional foundations and focused on issues relating to reproductive health, general health, gender rights and gender equality. There is broad recognition in many African countries that population problems can be effectively addressed by fighting poverty and by improving maternal and child health and the status of women. The experience we have acquired in Africa through the implementation of the declarations and of the Programme of Action has shown that progress in this area depends of overcoming the following major handicaps: overall poverty; political instability; civil war; economic crisis; lack of transparency in the implementation of population strategies and policies; and gaps in the coordination of demographic policies and programmes.

To those major handicaps we must add: a shortage of financial and human resources; a lack of health infrastructure; the absence of long-term plans based on ensuring gender equality in all development sectors; and the high incidence and rapid spread of HIV/AIDS, with devastating consequences for the development process in Africa.

Those are but a few of the problems that the report of the preparatory committee has brought to the attention of the Assembly at this special session. The international community worked hard to formulate and adopt the Programme of Action. Some isolated instances of implementation can be noted, but we are far from reaching our objectives. The worldwide results obtained so far in implementing the Programme clearly do not meet expectations or forecasts. That is why, as we stand on the threshold of the twenty-first century, the international community must redouble its efforts to reach the ICPD objectives, which are of crucial importance for the sustainable development of developing countries, in particular those in Africa, which are facing many political, social and economic obstacles.

We appeal to the international community to strengthen its commitment to the Programme of Action. This requires renewed political will and substantial financial support for the Programme. The UNFPA and other relevant agencies of the United Nations system must have sufficient financial resources to enable them effectively to play their proper role. The capacity of regional and subregional institutions must be strengthened to promote the implementation of the Programme of Action. In the same vein, regional and subregional initiatives aimed at attaining the ICPD objectives should enjoy constant support. Finally, at the national level, Member States must be given effective assistance so that they can properly address the Programme of Action, adapt it to their own needs and implement the relevant recommendations.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to Mr. Hreinne Lindal, Chairman of the Observer delegation of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta.

Mr. Lindal (Sovereign Military Order of Malta): I am speaking on behalf of the Sovereign Military Order of

Malta, the oldest institution in the world whose mission is to provide humanitarian assistance. Ever since its foundation in Jerusalem almost nine centuries ago, the Order has been persevering in its dedication to alleviating human suffering in war and in peace, including misery and poverty. Over the centuries, this vocation has earned it universal respect throughout the world and the recognition of its full sovereignty by the international community and by 83 States Members of the United Nations.

Consistent with its long tradition, the Order operates in all continents through nine Priories and Sub-priories and 42 national Knights Associations. The Order's primary objective is to alleviate suffering, to bring comfort to the afflicted and to provide assistance to the needy. The Order achieves this goal wherever it can through health facilities and also through individual service in homes, in shelters and in the poor dwellings of the disinherited. Its commitment is not to the sick alone, but also to the marginalized, the persecuted and the displaced. It thus safeguards human rights and human dignity.

Today the Order provides assistance at a level that far exceeds anything it was traditionally able to offer. The octagonal cross has become the emblem of hospitals, some with a high degree of specialization, clinics, first-aid stations and dispensaries, with a broadened network of structures and specialized assistance for the needy.

The Order of Malta cannot remain passive before the problem of more than 800 million people all around the world who are living in conditions of abject poverty. Its quality as a subject of international law allows it to work with independence and efficacy and in accordance with its commitment to the *obsequium pauperum*. The presence today of the Order's humanitarian action in over 100 countries is a proof of its concern. Many parts of Africa, Asia and Latin America can testify to the Order's capacity for humanitarian work. Its presence is of particular relevance in Europe, the Middle East, North America and Australia. These are our credentials.

Poverty is implicitly included in many articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 10 December 1948. Immersed in poverty, no one can claim the exercise of all the rights and freedoms set forth in the Declaration. The rights to protection, freedom from slavery and degrading treatment; freedom of residence and the rights to own property and to have access to public services; a person's rights to social security, to obtain a just and equitable remuneration for work, ensuring for himself and for his family an existence worthy of human dignity; and the right to rest and leisure are violated when poverty is a condition of life.

Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights says:

> "Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services."

In addition, article 26 says:

> "Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages."

The Sovereign Military Order of Malta considers that the aforementioned text presses for a coordinated action to fight poverty, not only in the previously mentioned continents, but also in the pockets of poverty that can be found in the main cities of Europe and North America.

The Sovereign Order of Malta considers the adoption of the following measures, among others, to be very urgent. The coordination of efforts and opportunities is an urgent need, including the participation of States, humanitarian entities and the private sector. The investment in culture, education and sanitary problems is also and equally urgent. The right of birth, the capacity to obtain elementary education and the possibility to accede to professional education must be urgently implemented. Hospital treatment, motherhood and childhood must be entitled to special care and action.

Every right corresponds to a duty and the Sovereign Order of Malta is conscious of what its duties are. In the Roman Catholic tradition, we affirm that human rights are created at God's hand, anteceding any human convention. Dedication and organization are needed.

To end, let me recall that reality tells us how distant from the appointed objectives we still are. To find a remedy to the actual situation and its consequences on political, economical and social stability, the Order of Malta is proud to offer its support to the United Nations and ready to cooperate in the heavy burden of alleviating mankind's suffering.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Carl Gutierrez, Governor of Guam.

Mr. Gutierrez (Guam): Guam is indeed honoured and privileged to be participating in this forum.

The Cairo Programme of Action is a real vision of the future — a future in which the people and the resources of our world exist in balance. The Programme is a vision of the world in which men and women are truly equal, a world that cares for its elderly, its poor and disadvantaged and gives them opportunity.

As a small island, Guam faces many challenges. Just 210 square miles in size, Guam is naturally more vulnerable and susceptible to the effects of disaster and regional economic and demographic pressures. We also remain one of 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories inscribed pursuant to the Charter. This unresolved question of our status is probably the single greatest threat to our ability to carry out our vision for social and economic progress.

In 1995, the leaders of our community, people from every walk of life, got together to put in writing our vision for the future. In that document, which we called VISION 2001, we identified the limitations of our resources. We created a blueprint that recognized a limit to the number of people that can be sustained by our fragile yet pristine environment. We also laid out measured goals that will help us achieve an improved quality of life for all our people.

Today, I am proud to say, we have achieved over 70 per cent of our goals and we are in the midst of revising our plans and once again looking towards the future. One of the remaining impediments to our progress is a situation that is regularly reviewed by Member States pursuant to the Charter: Guam's status.

As we attempt to reduce the natural population growth — even as we attempt to enhance education and provide a social safety net for the needy — both legal and illegal immigration under the administering Power's regime threatens the balance needed to keep our fragile economy and environment from breaking under the strain. These matters must be addressed if our natural resources, our socio-economic development and our indigenous culture are to flourish.

We are not, however, using our status as an excuse, as we take seriously responsible governance and our commitment to human rights.

On the issue of equality between men and women, we turn to our culture for guidance. The Chamorro people have always understood that women are the custodians of the future. When sixteenth-century colonists first came to our island, they thought that the elimination of the males would end the Chamorro culture, but they were wrong. The vibrancy and renaissance of our culture today is a living testament to the strength and fortitude of the Chamorro women, the force of the matriarchs — the *Maga'Haga*, as we call them.

Today, the role of women continues to be as it has always been: a powerful force in shaping the island's internal decision-making and external relationships. Our laws and political process have followed our culture. My political partner, our Lieutenant Governor, is a woman. Our First Lady, Geri Gutierrez, who is here tonight, a woman of great strength, is also a stellar example of the importance of women on our island, as she embraces her role to touch people's lives and has a direct hand in implementing programmes throughout the community.

Over the years, however, the process of westernization has impacted on our customs and culture in many ways, bringing both the good and the bad. Along with rapid economic development, a wage-generated economy and world-class facilities that welcome visitors to our shores, have come the urban social problems faced by so many of us.

I am proud to say, however, that, in the spirit of the Cairo Programme and in line with the implementation recommendations, we are using the tools of today to successfully combat these new problems. Over the past five years, we on Guam have concentrated on family violence and social programmes for the elderly and the poor. Strict local laws, including the mandatory arrest policy in cases of family violence, have greatly reduced the threat of violence against women and children. Stepped-up programmes have doubled the amount of collections for child support and we have doubled our outreach programmes for the elderly with many new public infrastructure assets. We will soon be establishing the women's resource centre, where women can come to one location to find help for problems with health, parenting or any other area of concern.

Our programmes have resulted in a significant drop in teen pregnancy. Moreover, there is a decline in our natural population growth rate as young families embrace an appreciation of the limitations of our finite resources.

One of my personal passions is the advancement of early childhood development programmes, especially for ages zero to three, which help men and women become better parents from the moment a child is conceived. I truly believe that by promoting early childhood development we are helping to raise a new generation with brighter opportunities, a new generation that turns away from violence and that understands love and respect, a new generation that can live the vision laid out in the Cairo consensus.

Guam is building this future on one of the most solid foundations, that is, our deep and abiding respect for the concept of family. We have a local word for it: *inafamaolek*. It means the understanding of the interdependence of the extended family, as shown by First Lady Geri's People Helping People programme. When a cousin or a brother is in need of help, there is always a safety net. Children are cared for by relatives at home, and the elderly are kept close by to pass their wisdom on to the younger generations. In Guam, our elderly hold a very special place in society, one of great respect and attention. And while there are many, many Government programmes that support these beliefs, no social programme created by a Government can take the place of family.

Family and culture are the foundation upon which any future progress of a community must be built. If we do not keep this foundation strong and deep, all we have achieved will slip away like a sandcastle on a beach. We still have much more to do. Our goals include strengthening the institution of marriage. We need to bring more out of poverty and reduce the number of families dependent upon social security programmes by creating more economic opportunity. We need to do more to address the problem of HIV/AIDS.

Building upon both our culture and, of course, our emerging ethnic diversity, we can do more to advance a more global view of our collective future. Improving our environment through better stewardship of the land and the sea is a never-ending struggle for balance in the face of development.

As we end this special session and look to the population and development challenges of the twenty-first century, please accept our assurances that the people of Guam are committed to addressing these challenges in concert with the goals and objectives of the Programme of Action.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Mokthar Lamani, chairman of the Observer delegation for the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

Mr. Lamani (Organization of the Islamic Conference): It is my privilege to address the Assembly on behalf of the General Secretariat of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC). I bring greetings from our Secretary-General and his good wishes for the success of the twenty-first special session of the General Assembly.

Because of the lateness of the hour and the need to conclude the special session in good time, my statement will be brief. I join other delegations in congratulating you, Mr. President, and your colleagues in the Bureau on your assumption of your high offices. Your superior abilities and qualities of leadership are amply reflected in the manner in which this special session is being directed.

The OIC has extended to the United Nations its support for the Principles and commitments adopted in the Cairo Programme of Action. Many OIC member States are among those who participated in drafting the Programme and who joined the other nations to adopt it. Since its adoption, the Programme of Action has had a marked influence on a number of OIC member States in formulating or transforming national legislation so as to support healthy, population-related national policies and programmes. Although our member States have encountered numerous obstacles along the way, including institutional, financial and other constraints, advances have been, and are being made.

The OIC congratulates the Chairman of the Commission on Population and Development, His Excellency Ambassador Anwarul Karim Chowdhury, the Permanent Representative of Bangladesh, for his patience, perseverance and leadership in the collective efforts that have gone into drafting the proposals for further implementation of the Cairo Programme of Action. He has brought not only pride to his own country, but also honour to the OIC, as Bangladesh is a distinguished State member of our organization. The OIC would also like to extol the Secretary-General of the United Nations, His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan, and his staff, and the Executive Director of the United Nations

Population Fund (UNFPA), Mrs. Nafis Sadik, and her staff, for the comprehensive documentation and for all the painstaking efforts made in organizing the preparatory committees, The Hague Forum and all the other arrangements leading to the convening of the present special session.

It is gratifying to see that several elements of the Declaration on Human Rights in Islam, adopted at the Nineteenth Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, held in Cairo in August 1990 — the human rights of women, the purity and sanctity of marriage and support for a strong and interdependent family structure — are, in essence, echoed and reflected in the Cairo Programme of Action. The Declaration of Human Rights in Islam, the Cairo Programme of Action and the proposals for further implementation of the Cairo Programme, which are before the Assembly, all emphasize the role of Governments in adopting healthy and constructive developmental policies that provide population-related services. Such services include, among other actions, fortifying national capacities so as to strengthen national information systems, national statistic and data-collection mechanisms and common indicators on reproductive health programmes; establishment of programmes to support the elderly members of the population; intensifying efforts to protect the rights and interests of refugees and migrants and to cater to their basic needs; providing education and training to foster a greater public knowledge and awareness of population issues; and ensuring respect for and promotion and protection of women's human rights, including political, civil, economic, social, cultural and reproductive rights and, correspondingly, women's participation in the fulfilment of these rights.

States members of the OIC remain resolved to continue to apply their best efforts and to mobilize their domestic and other resources, to the extent feasible, to accomplish the objectives of the Cairo Programme of Action at the national, regional and global levels. This requires the continued and enhanced support and partnership of the developed countries and of relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. Together we should continue to move forward towards the next century seeking the accomplishment of all those social and economic developmental objectives that would spell progress and prosperity for all in the global village of the future, glimpses of which can be seen on the horizon as we approach the frontiers of the next millennium. The OIC will, in the time that lies ahead, continue to work towards this goal with the international community and, in particular, the United Nations, the UNFPA and the other funds, programmes and agencies of the United Nations system in implementing the tasks identified in Cairo, which are being further developed at this special session in the light of experience.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now call on the Programme Manager for Statistics of the Secretariat of the Caribbean Community, Mr. Osmond Gordon.

Mr. Gordon (Caribbean Community): It is my honour and privilege to make this statement on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

After Cairo, the Caribbean Community identified, on the basis of the preparatory consultative work undertaken before Cairo, six priority areas in a Caribbean plan of action. These areas are migration, interrelations between population and sustainable development, population policy, adolescent fertility, reproductive health and family planning, and advocacy programmes. A multisectoral approach was employed in addressing these priority areas. It included not only population programmes at the national and regional levels but also health, education, gender and development, and youth development programmes. At this juncture of the review of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and of the achievements and constraints since Cairo, the priority areas identified in the Caribbean plan of action continue to be of critical importance for the Caribbean Community.

In addressing the way forward for the Caribbean Community, we are guided by the policy directives received from the Conference of Heads of Government, the highest authority of the Community. The way forward for the Caribbean Community has also been informed by research conducted in the Community as well as by the reviews of progress made since Cairo and the key constraints to implementation identified in the Caribbean subregional review.

With respect to adolescent reproductive and sexual health, school-based studies on adolescent health have shown that a high percentage of youths in school are sexually active, have multiple partners at an early age, do not use contraceptives and do not worry about HIV/AIDS.

The rapidly increasing incidence of HIV/AIDS transmission is of concern to the region. The problems identified in this sector are the high prevalence of HIV/AIDS among youth; high mortality rates, attributed

to AIDS, among the 15-to-25 age group; the absence of programmes that specifically address the treatment of HIV-positive individuals; and the prohibitive cost of anti-retroviral drugs. It is projected that the direct cost of the epidemic plus the indirect cost due to loss of income will rise sharply in the region and may be upwards of $500 million by year 2006.

It is in this context that the ministers responsible for health within the Caribbean Cooperation in Health Phase II have set the goal of ensuring improvements in the quality, availability and appropriate use of reproductive health services through strategies that include reorienting the health services, promoting policies of reproductive health education for students in schools and working with non-governmental organizations to increase awareness of reproductive health rights and gender issues. The ministers responsible for health have agreed to pursue the goal of improving the health and quality of life of youth, and by year 2009 they expect to see an increase in the proportion of adolescents with healthy lifestyles.

The Conference of Heads of Government has also placed high priority on youth development. In March 1999 the Conference received the views of youths developed during the youth summit held in October 1998 in Barbados. At this youth summit — which was supported jointly by the CARICOM secretariat, the Commonwealth Youth Programme and the United Nations Population Fund — a Caribbean regional declaration on adolescent health and rights and a regional action plan were prepared.

In addition, Caribbean countries have demonstrated the political and social will to achieve gender equity. This has been demonstrated through the establishment of women's bureaux, the signing of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and promoting and introducing measures to encourage male responsibility and participation. However, there are still some major problems to be addressed. These include high unemployment levels among women and inadequate protection for some categories of female workers, namely domestic workers and free-zone employees. The high incidence of gender-based violence against women in and outside the home continues to be a major concern for the Community.

The Caribbean countries have attempted to address these social problems in a context of mitigating circumstances. The first of these relates to the negative impact of migration. The brain drain of critical skills away from the Caribbean, the increased risk of communicable diseases, the erosion of gains made in the eradication of measles and polio in CARICOM member States and the repatriation of illegal immigrants are areas of concern.

The second of these mitigating circumstances relates to environmental factors. The Caribbean suffers seasonally from natural disasters which have devastating effects on the national resources of the islands, whose main economic activities are based on tourism, commerce and agriculture. As a rule the task of rebuilding economies and stabilizing the social and emotional lives of the people of the subregion is a tremendous burden on the already fragile economies.

The third mitigating circumstance relates to the heavy debt burden. The obligations of demanding debt-servicing have limited the ability of CARICOM member States to make more financial provision for social services.

In spite of these constraints, the Caribbean countries recognize the interrelationship between population, sustained economic growth and sustainable development. In response they have articulated clear policy guidelines, institutionalized mechanisms for the incorporation of population variables into programmes and projects and put structures in place to monitor the effects of socio-demographic trends and development strategies. However, limited financial and human resources have restricted the capacity to develop, strengthen and maintain the social-statistical databases and information systems so critical to social and economic planning, policy development, programme implementation and monitoring.

Consequently, the Caribbean countries need the continued understanding and support of the international donor community to achieve the full implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action in the following priority areas: the strengthening of information systems with relevant analysis, indicators and research to inform social- and economic-development planning and programme-monitoring and evaluation; development of programmes targeting youth to effect behavioural change and the provision of special services for youth; provision of an expanded response to combat HIV/AIDS with special emphasis on both in- and out-of-school youth; stemming of the erosion of advances made in gender equity and social justice caused by the impact of poverty, globalization and debt repayment; fostering of technical cooperation between supplier and receiving countries of migrants, paying particular attention to participation in

training activities and sharing training costs; the sharing of information to inform disease surveillance programmes; sharing of information on the repatriation of illegal migrants; and closer collaboration between Governments and civil society in the planning and implementation of programmes.

The Caribbean Community wishes to reaffirm its support for and commitment to continued implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action over the next five years.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Daw Swedan, Under-Secretary-General for Social Affairs of the League of Arab States.

Mr. Swedan (League of Arab States) (*spoke in Arabic*): I am honoured to be participating in this session, which has brought together the majority of world leaders on population and development matters: diplomats, politicians, statisticians and other experts. This important session is the culmination of five years of programmes, plans, and projects drawing on resources and tools all aimed at implementing the Programme of Action and other recommendations of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), as adopted by the United Nations system.

The League of Arab States was a participant in regional and international preparatory meetings relating to population issues, which demonstrates our deep interest in this subject and our conviction that it is the role of mankind to work towards social development and to participate in political and national security affairs whether in our region or in the world at large. That is why we have created the mechanisms with which to participate in cultural, health and social affairs with a view to improving the quality of life for all human beings. We have created specialized ministerial councils in the areas of health, social affairs, youth and information, along with committees on population, women and youth.

In this context, the League of Arab States is implementing an Arab project on maternal and child health in 10 Arab countries, in cooperation with the United Nations Population Fund, the Arab Gulf programme of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Children's Fund, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia. This project has provided basic and important databases for Arab countries on all aspects of maternal and child health with a view to strengthening national capabilities and improving interaction and coordination between organizers and those they serve, so that their benefits can be increased and can be reflected in national strategies, policies and programmes in the fields of health and development. In connection with the implementation and follow-up of the recommendations and programmes of action of the World Summit for Social Development and the other international conferences, and in the light of Arab experience and success on children's issues and the success of the multilateral financing and in implementation, partnerships in which we are engaged, we have begun a major new stage in this project, which will enable us to provide additional health information to family members including on reproductive health within the framework of the Arab project on family health in the Arab countries that are participating in the project.

Because of the problems encountered by developing countries and by Arab countries relating to the lack of resources and expertise for population programmes that we all aspire to, especially since the majority of world population lives in developing countries, it is my hope that the Assembly's decisions at this special session will be commensurate with the challenges faced by mankind, so that we may enter the third millennium with our sights set on putting an end to the development gap separating the countries of the North and of the South and on putting in place a plan of action that will improve standards of living and make it possible for future generations to enjoy equitable and sustainable development.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with the decision previously adopted, I shall now invite the representatives of three non-governmental organizations to make their statements. As decided by the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the preparatory committee, their statements shall be limited to five minutes.

I first give the floor to Ms. Ingar Brueggemann, Director-General of the International Planned Parenthood Federation.

Ms. Brueggemann (International Planned Parenthood Federation): I speak on behalf of the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), which was founded in 1952 in India and which now works with 140 national member family planning

associations in over 170 countries. We work to advance sexual and reproductive health and rights, including family planning. IPPF and its member associations have been fully involved in the five-year review process of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD). I believe that civil society is in the making. As in Cairo, more than 40 representatives of family-planning associations have been active participants on their government delegations here in New York, as they were also at the Operational Review and Appraisal of the Implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, held at The Hague.

Throughout the ICPD process, IPPF has championed as priorities the following needs: to continue to provide accessible, affordable and appropriate sexual and reproductive health services, including family planning, information and education, with special reference to the poor and the under-served; to promote safe motherhood in order to end the tragedy of women dying unnecessarily during pregnancy and in childbirth; to meet the specific sexual and reproductive health needs and rights of young people; and to make a reality of sexual and reproductive rights for all women, men and young people.

Young people: we assume that most adolescents will become healthy and productive adults, but many millions, unfortunately, will not. More than half of new HIV infections occur in young people. Today, one in 20 adolescents worldwide contracts a sexually transmitted disease. One tenth of all births are to teenage girls, posing increased risks to both the far-too-young mother and the child.

The IPPF appeals to governmental and non-governmental agencies to support us in adopting polices and legislation which will ensure that young people's specific sexual and reproductive health needs are met through appropriate, accessible and affordable high-quality services, and to ensure that these services respect the human rights of young people, as well as gender equity, privacy and confidentiality.

We wish you to help us to provide reliable and effective education on all sexual matters in the school curriculums, as well as outside schools, and to enable parents to deal better with the often difficult taboo subject.

We wish you to help us to honour the commitment made at Cairo to substantially increase funding for sexual health care, with sufficient allocations to the special needs of young people. Perhaps we might still dream of the eventual investment of 20 per cent to be spent on youth.

Let me turn briefly to the silent tragedy of women dying in childbirth, which in fact was the very cause, 47 years ago, when brave and angry women in India started the IPPF movement. Knowing that the technologies exist for preventing and managing the causes of maternal deaths, this has been and remains a compelling reason for IPPF's work to address this unacceptable reality. Our efforts, in collaboration with many other partners, are based on the principle that the natural act of childbearing should not deny a woman her right to life.

In this context, better family-planning services, with a full range of contraceptive methods, play an important role in reducing the incidence of maternal deaths caused by unsafe abortion, as well as in avoiding unwanted pregnancies, especially among the young.

IPPF knows that many women are deprived of important and fundamental rights and are subject to discrimination in important areas. IPPF and its family-planning associations are in the vanguard of efforts to ensure that the rights inherent and explicitly stated in the Cairo Programme of Action are clarified and made a reality.

IPPF is committed to the continued and accelerated implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action. It seeks partnership. It seeks partnerships with Governments, international bodies, civil society organizations and young people, who are vital in this equation. We have found that young people are responsible and have a powerful voice and good advice to give. We should recognize that they are a major force for the good.

I know only too well that I am in a very privileged position to address the Assembly in the name of IPPF and many colleagues and partners worldwide, including the Youth Coalition. I want to express to members, as representatives of their Governments, our gratitude for the financial and institutional support that we receive from many donor countries and multilateral partners and through the immense investment in countries directly through the family-planning associations.

I want to share IPPF's strong belief that poverty alleviation, population growth in balance with existing resources, sustainable development, human rights issues and global equality are all critical to the overall

development process. We see ourselves as a strong partner with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and all other organizations of civil society and Governments in this continued, accelerated and adequately resourced implementation of the key actions of the ICPD Programme of Action, one of the twentieth century's major contributions to global thinking about the key role of sexual and reproductive health and rights in promoting equity and development.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to Ms. Jeanne Head, representative of the International Right to Life Federation.

Ms. Head (International Right to Life Federation): My name is Jeanne Head. I am the International Right To Life Federation's representative to the United Nations in New York. I am here to speak for International Right to Life Federation and the Coalition for Women, Children and the Family, which is a coalition representing more than 100 non-governmental organizations from all parts of the globe.

We are dedicated to the protection and support of the family as the basic unit of society and to the protection of all innocent human life from conception to natural death. We see a woman's life as a continuum deserving compassionate protection and support beginning at her conception and proceeding throughout her entire life cycle. We are committed to ensuring respect and protection for women during the later years of their lives when they are most vulnerable to abandonment by their families or society; to securing protection and appropriate assistance for young women and their children who are subject to social neglect; and to the full protection of the child from the very beginning of the child's life at conception. And we are committed to the protection of the rights of parents in relation to the religious and moral education of their children and in the sensitive areas of reproduction.

The Cairo Programme of Action was faithful to these principles, which recognize the rights and primary role of parents in these sensitive areas. It is also important to remember that the Cairo Programme of Action specifically states that the International Conference on Population and Development did not create any new international human rights and affirms the application of universally human rights standards to all aspects of population programmes. Although some universally recognized human rights are related to reproduction, not all so-called reproductive rights are human rights. We urge the Assembly to continue to reject any attempts to classify so-called reproductive rights as human rights. The Cairo *chapeau* specifically recognizes national sovereignty in this regard. However, sovereignty could be bypassed if any of these so-called reproductive rights were recognized as human rights.

The Cairo Programme of Action was supposed to mark the beginning of a new era of linking development with population control programmes. In the five years since its adoption, implementation has been strong on control and short on development.

For example, although a decrease in maternal mortality in the developing world was named as a top priority in Cairo, we are now being told that there has been no significant change since Cairo. The reason? The major development resources have been used on population control methods — including the promotion of abortion — rather than on improving general and maternal health care, which is known to be the key to saving women's lives. The developed countries have known how to save women's lives for more than 40 years. The World Health Organization (WHO) affirms this fact. WHO states in its 1991 *Maternal Mortality, A Global Factbook*, that the dramatic decline in maternal mortality in the developed world which took place from 1941 to 1951 coincided

> "with the development of obstetric techniques and improvements in the general health status of women".

As an obstetric nurse who has spent my life caring for women having babies, I know this to be true. I would like to make a plea that, in the implementation of this document, national and international bodies put greater emphasis on resources and on improving health care in the developing world, particularly maternal health care. Women in many parts of the world need clean water, nutrition and basic health care for themselves and their families — not the right to violently destroy their children before they are born.

I have a grave concern about the false and dangerous claims that the way to reduce maternal mortality in the developing world is to legalize abortion. Women suffer serious physical, emotional and psychological damage and even death from so-called "safe legal" abortion. It should be noted that there is no such thing as safe abortion.

Dr. Donna Harrison, an obstetrician-gynaecologist who has experience as a volunteer in a Haitian development cooperative, has stated that making abortion

legal in the developing countries would result in increased maternal deaths and injuries.

In the United States, where abortion has been legal for over 26 years and where health standards are high, women are still dying from botched legal abortions. And the maternal mortality rate is four times that of Ireland, where abortion is not legal and which has the lowest maternal mortality rate in the world. And, of course, abortion is never safe for the youngest member of the human family — the unborn child — who, at the time of an early abortion at eight or ten weeks, already has a beating heart, brainwaves, eyes, ears, fingers and toes.

It is important to provide compassionate and effective care for the other victim of abortion: the woman who may suffer serious physical, emotional and psychological damage from so-called safe legal abortion. In addition to the vast pro-life network of crisis pregnancy centres, we are involved throughout the world in compassionate counselling and care of women damaged by abortion.

It is essential that the implementation process protect parental rights and responsibilities with regard to education, reproductive health and sex education in compliance with the Cairo Programme of Action and with United Nations human rights documents. This body can never forget one of its own founding documents, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which, in article 26, paragraph 3, states:

> "Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given their children."

Nor can it forget the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which in article 18, paragraph 4, states:

> "The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to have respect for the liberty of parents ... to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions."

What is very clear and very disappointing is that, in this new document, this body has not sufficiently addressed the very real problems women and their children face in the developing world: disease and hunger. When a woman is sick or hungry, she does not call out for her reproductive rights, but for food and medicine. One day — I hope not too distant — this body will awaken to these real needs. On that day, women's lives will begin to be saved. And on that day this body will make giant steps towards the promises made at its founding.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like to note that our timetable is not being adhered to. It should be, and if speakers do not comply with it, the presidency will apply the regulations and interrupt the speaker.

I now call on Ms. Gita Sen, the representative of Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era.

Ms. Sen (Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era): I am speaking today on behalf of Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWNE), a network of southern feminists committed to development with both economic justice and gender justice. DAWNE is a member of the Women's Coalition for the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), which brings together over 110 non-governmental organizations from across the globe, working together to support the implementation of the Cairo Programme of Action and, in doing so, to advance gender equality and sexual and reproductive health and rights.

In country after country, in the years since Cairo, we have been coming together to transform population-related policies so that they are more firmly grounded in the human rights of women and girls. Tonight, the Women's Coalition celebrates the overwhelming support from Governments for the important advances we have made together in the last few days: promoting and protecting the sexual and reproductive health and rights of young people, with respect for their need for privacy and confidentiality and their ability to make responsible life choices; taking major steps to reduce the tragedy of maternal deaths by strengthening women's access to essential obstetric care and, importantly, by making sure that health providers are better trained and equipped to provide safe abortion services; identifying ways to prevent and treat HIV/AIDS and to provide access to services without stigma, discrimination or violence; fostering partnerships between Governments and civil society with full respect for non-governmental organization autonomy; and recognizing the urgent need for a more enabling macro-economic environment, accessible health services and greater economic justice. Most heartening during these days, and during the entire process of the Cairo+5 review, has been the enthusiasm and seriousness of young voices claiming their rights and challenging us to respond with equal concern and enthusiasm.

While we celebrate what we have accomplished together here, much remains to be done in the real world outside these walls. Let us not forget that every minute of every day, a woman dies of mostly preventable causes related to pregnancy and childbirth; that young people, especially girls, remain vulnerable to violence and sexual abuse; and that health-care services are still far from adequate in terms of resources, accessibility, scope and quality. But we in the Women's Coalition believe that working together we can make progress, sooner rather than later.

We know the overwhelming weight of the support we have on our side from Governments and agencies. Sadly, a small minority that opposed Cairo in the first place continues to do so. However, one of the most fascinating successes of ICPD implementation has been the extent to which parties initially sceptical of the Cairo approach are now quoting it chapter and verse and will brook no departure from it. The Women's Coalition looks forward to building on the successes of Cairo and Cairo+5 to advance women's human rights, including our sexual and reproductive rights, in the coming years.

Tonight, at the end of these negotiations, we wish to say once again to Governments and agencies that the women of the world care — care deeply — because it is our bodies and our lives that are at stake. The new millennium will be the millennium of women's rights, gender equality and gender justice. The women of the world are here — in the gallery, and also in official delegations. We are half the world's population. We are with you; we are still watching you; and we will never go away.

Report of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the Twenty-first Special Session (A/S-21/5 and Add.1)

Agenda item 9

Adoption of the final document

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Anwarul Karim Chowdhury of Bangladesh, Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the Twenty-first Special Session.

Mr. Chowdhury (Bangladesh), Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole: On 30 June, at the beginning of the twenty-first special session, called the review and appraisal of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, I had the privilege, as the Chairman of the Preparatory Committee for the special session, of reporting to the Assembly on the outcome of the two PrepCom sessions in March and June, and of the informal consultations held in between. I now have the pleasure of reporting to you as the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the special session.

Before I do that, allow me to thank all delegations and members of the Secretariat from the bottom of my heart for their cooperation and the support given to me in my work. A special word of thanks must go to Mrs. Nafis Sadik, the ever-dynamic leader of the United Nations Population Fund. She and her team contributed magnificently to the preparations for the review and to the review itself at the special session.

The Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole took up the process where the PrepCom ended. At the end of the PrepCom on 29 June, we found ourselves in a position in which the most difficult paragraphs were still outstanding, defying our repeated efforts for agreement at the PrepCom. I am pleased to report to the Assembly now that the final outcome of our efforts has been a success, a grand success.

The participation of the delegations on outstanding issues had been very broad; the conference room brimmed with delegations who made tireless efforts to gain something tangible. Their engagement was intense. The spirit was indomitable. The persistent drive to look forward and to gain something more has been rewarding. The process of arriving at a consensus was extraordinarily difficult, but the result was gratifying. We were able to build on what we constructed in 1994 in Cairo; we were able to map out the major elements needing further attention in order to implement the process that was outlined five years ago.

As we repeatedly ran into contentious issues in the course of our negotiations, the experience of the 1997 special session on Rio+5 haunted us. Many were afraid that our efforts would be yet another attempt ending in frustration, that we would not be able to gain what we had hoped for. But the reality this time turned out to be pleasantly different.

We now have a 106-paragraph document that looks into the future. It renews our commitments, evaluates our attempts and gives direction on how to proceed for achieving more. Above all, it has raised our spirits to

confront the biggest difficulties that humanity has been facing to ensure a better life for all.

An important element that contributed to our outcome is the totally transparent and participatory nature of our negotiations. This I recommend for the success of all future +5 reviews, particularly for Copenhagen and Beijing next year.

We have gained on the major substantive areas through a prolonged engagement. We have been able to focus on attaining more in our efforts for equality and the empowerment of women. We made emphatic pronouncements for women's rights. We had strong language for ending discrimination against the girl child, language that is in keeping with the Programme's paragraph 1.15. Measures needed to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS have been substantially covered. We dealt with the needs of youth more thoroughly. We were able to clearly identify the benefits of public-private partnership and collaboration with civil society. We renewed our commitments for resource mobilization. We not only upheld the purpose and Principles we laid down for ourselves in Cairo, we indeed were able to elaborate on and add to them for their full and effective implementation.

We now have a document that gives guidance on where to focus for further implementation of the difficult task to which we committed ourselves. Our achievements have injected a lot of enthusiasm and expectation.

We are now confident that this process will restore the momentum that was generated in Cairo. Our progress in the past stumbled in many cases due to a disparity between our expectations and the reality. We only hope that this experience will not be repeated this time and that our programmes will not suffer due to drying up of resources, despite political commitments.

We have already heard in many statements in the plenary pledges to take our process forward. Today we see the beginning of a process whose momentum, I am confident, will be redoubled in the years ahead. Let me conclude by saying: we will see you all in 2004.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I particularly thank the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the Twenty-first Special Session for his work and for his statement.

I now ask Ms. Gabriella Vukovich, Vice-Chairperson and Rapporteur of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the Twenty-first Special Session to introduce the report of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole.

Ms. Vukovich (Hungary), Rapporteur of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole: I have the honour to present to the General Assembly today the report of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the Twenty-first Special Session of the General Assembly, which is contained in document A/S-21/5 and Add.1.

The Ad Hoc Committee had four meetings on 30 June and 1 July to consider the agenda item allocated to it by the General Assembly, namely item 8, entitled "Overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development".

In paragraph 21 of document A/S-21/5, the Ad Hoc Committee recommends a draft resolution entitled "Proposals for key actions for the further implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development" to the General Assembly for adoption. The text of the key actions is contained in document A/S-21/5/Add.1.

Spanish- and French-speaking delegations have found inconsistencies in the translated versions of the document. These will be brought to the attention of the Secretariat for incorporation in the final version.

I thus submit the report of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Twenty-first Special Session to the General Assembly for its consideration.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): If there is no proposal under rule 66 of the rules of procedure, I shall take it that the General Assembly decides not to discuss the report before it in documents A/S-21/5 and A/S-21/5/Add.1.

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Statements before action on the draft resolution will therefore be limited to explanations of vote. The positions of delegations regarding the various recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the Twenty-first Special Session have been made clear in the Committee. May I remind delegations that, in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats. In view of the lateness of the hour,

however, I urge delegations to limit their statements to three minutes.

Mr. Carreras (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Argentine Republic joined in the consensus in the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole on the document on key actions for the further implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, which is before the Assembly in document A/S-21/5/Add.1, and wishes to explain its position and enter a number of reservations.

The text concentrates exclusively on a number of aspects of the Cairo Programme of Action and ignores other crucial matters relating to population and development. Investment in education and in general health, for instance, ought to have been the objects of greater attention and closer analysis.

The Argentine Republic wishes to enter reservations concerning the concepts of reproductive health, sexual health and reproductive rights; these are consistent with those we stated at the time of the Cairo Conference. We reaffirm that we do not accept the inclusion of abortion either as a service or as a method of regulating fertility. Our reservation is based on the universal right to life from conception to natural death. From the moment of conception, the human person, as a unique and irreplaceable being, enjoys the right to life as the fount of all other rights.

The Argentine Republic enters reservations on the issue of sexual health and reproductive health; it understands this in the context of overall human health, including risk-free motherhood. Women's health should thus be considered at all stages of life, not just in terms of reproduction.

With respect to the term "acceptable family planning and contraceptive methods, including new options and underutilized methods" [para. 57 (a)], we state our reservations, and do not accept the inclusion of abortion or voluntary interruption of pregnancy in this context. The practical options must be within the limits established by the national constitutions of States.

The Argentine Republic has a reservation with respect to the use of the term "gender"; its understanding of that term relates to the biological sexual identity of men and of women.

The Argentine Republic highlights the rights, duties and obligations of parents with respect to the education of children, both general education and sex education. Sex education is a fundamental element of the educational rights of parents: article 26 (3) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that "Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children". That universal and inalienable right must be respected in all official and unofficial contexts, both within the family and outside it, in which children receive instruction or training. It is the interpretation of the Republic of Argentina that when there are references to young people, youth, adolescents, children, young men and young women in connection with sexual and reproductive health programmes, there must also be a recognition of the rights, duties and responsibilities of parents.

With respect to the expression "responsibilities towards the community" [para. 3], the Argentine Republic states the following reservation: family planning should be based on free choice and on respect for the human rights of spouses, without interference by the State or any possible subordination to goals or standards set by any Government or organization. The Argentine Republic notes that present references to evaluation omit any reference to the need to strengthen the family in the framework of the population and development policies set out in chapter V of the Programme of Action, despite the fact that the family has a fundamental role to play in the development process, being the basic unit of society.

The Argentine Republic wishes to enter reservations with respect to the use of the term "voluntary quality family-planning services" in part B of the document before us. We view this to mean that there must be no use of coercion, incentives, disincentives, quotas, demographic goals or similar elements.

Our reservations have their basis in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the American Convention on Human Rights.

Mr. Rahmtalla (Sudan): The delegation of the Sudan is pleased to join the rest of the international community, represented in this Assembly, in the adoption by consensus of the final document of this special session.

In doing so, the Government of the Sudan will continue to implement the recommendations contained in the document in conformity with paragraph 5, which states:

> "The implementation of the recommendations contained in the Programme of Action and those contained in the present document is the sovereign right of each country, consistent with national laws and development priorities, with full respect for the various religious and ethical values and cultural backgrounds of its people, and in conformity with universally recognized international human rights." [A/S-21/5/Add.1, para. 5]

In the view of my Government, the provisions of paragraph 63 (iii) address circumstances where abortion is not against the law. In this context, my Government emphasizes that in no case should abortion be promoted as a method of family planning.

Mr. Rosenthal (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation also has a brief reservation, the text of which it will submit to the Secretariat, as follows:

> "In the course of the adoption of the Cairo Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, Guatemala submitted certain reservations with respect to its implementation at the national level. As regards proposals on key actions for the further implementation of the Programme, to be adopted at this twenty-first special session of the General Assembly, our delegation joins the consensus, but without agreeing to anything in the document that does not accord with our reservations."

Mr. Padilla (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Republic of Nicaragua wishes to join in the consensus on the document and requests that our delegation's reservations to the Cairo Programme of Action be incorporated into it. Our delegation also wishes to state the following reservations.

First, when the report uses the terms "female-controlled methods", "new options", "underutilized methods" and "widest achievable range of family planning", we can accept them only so long as they do not imply abortion or pregnancy interruption.

Secondly, in Nicaragua, the comprehensive education of children is a priority right of parents, in conformity with our political Constitution and article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Thirdly, we accept the term "gender" if it is understood exclusively to indicate the sexual and biological identity of men and women.

Mr. Al Alous (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): The delegation of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya confirms its commitment to the objectives of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), especially an improved quality of human life and well-being; enhanced human development through the recognition of the interrelationship between development and population programmes and policies aimed at eliminating all forms of poverty; continued economic growth for sustainable development; the provision of health care and education services; the continuity of patterns of consumption and production; the achievement of food security; and the enjoyment of all fundamental human rights, including the right to development, in full respect for the characteristics and sovereignty of each State consistent with its national laws and development priorities and for the ethical and religious values and cultural backgrounds of peoples and in conformity with human rights and international instruments.

However, we should like to make the following reservations and ask that they be included in the report of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the Twenty-first Special Session of the General Assembly.

First, the delegation of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya wishes to make a general reservation on any provision in this document that runs counter to the Islamic *shariah* or any national law of our country. We also wish to reaffirm the reservations we expressed in the Cairo report and to recall them here.

Secondly, we express a particular reservation to paragraph 41 of document A/S-21/5/Add.1 and to any reference to reproductive rights as international human rights. The only human rights we recognize are those explicitly set out in binding and internationally agreed human rights instruments. No other human rights may be established through interpretation or implication.

Thirdly, as to paragraph 73 (a) on the rights of adolescents, our delegation adheres to the formulation adopted by the ICPD, in particular to the statement on respect for various religious and ethical values and cultural backgrounds. We oppose the new formulation of paragraph 73 (a) in the present document, which represents a departure from the ICPD report.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote or position.

The Assembly will now proceed to take a decision on the draft resolution, entitled "Proposals for key actions for the further implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development", recommended by the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the Twenty-first Special Session in paragraph 21 of document A/S-21/5. The text of the annex to the draft resolution is contained in document A/S-21/5/Add.1.

The Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the Twenty-first Special Session recommended the adoption of the draft resolution.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt the draft resolution?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution S-21/2).

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in explanation of position on the resolution just adopted.

Mr. El-Awdi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): The delegation of the State of Kuwait would like to reaffirm its support for the contents of the document just adopted on key actions for the further implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, contained in A/S-21/5/Add.1. We support the positive elements of the document, which are aimed at caring for the human person. At the same time, we should like to reaffirm that we have certain reservations: our commitment to any actions or policies with regard to population will be contingent upon the requirement that they do not run counter to the provisions and texts of the Islamic *shariah*, the norms of Kuwaiti society or the Constitution and laws of Kuwait. Implementation of the recommendations of the final document will take place on the basis of paragraph 5 of the text of the document relating to the key actions.

My delegation requests that my reservations be reflected in the report.

Mr. Saliba (Malta): Malta is committed to the overall goal of the document, namely, the promotion of the full dignity of the human person, with special emphasis on women and children, who continue to be those most in need of State intervention and the intervention of concerned international agencies to promote and secure their human rights. In joining the consensus, the delegation of Malta, consistent with its national legislation, which considers the termination of pregnancy to be illegal, would like to reiterate its reservations with respect to those sections of the document that directly or indirectly relate to induced abortion. The Maltese Government has no intention of legalizing any health measures that directly or indirectly lead to induced abortion.

We request that this statement be reflected in the report.

Mr. Zhang Weiqing (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The current special session of the General Assembly has just adopted the key actions for the further implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development. That document will further promote the implementation of the Programme of Action and affect the conduct of international collaboration.

On behalf of the Chinese delegation, and on my own behalf, I should like to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to the Secretary-General; the President of the General Assembly at its special session, the Foreign Minster of Uruguay, Mr. Didier Opertti; the Chairman of the preparatory committee and of the Ad Hoc Committee, the Permanent Representative of the People's Republic of Bangladesh to the United Nations, Ambassador Chowdhury; and the Chairman of the Group of 77, the Permanent Representative of Guyana to the United Nations, Ambassador Insanally, for their efforts and the skill they demonstrated, which led to the adoption of the document. My thanks also go to the other members of the Bureau, as well as to the staff of the Secretariat involved in the special session, for their hard work.

Population and development was the theme of the Cairo Conference, and it is the theme of the current special session. The further implementation of the Programme of Action will require a holistic approach and the correct implementation of the Principles established by the Cairo Conference. It will also require full respect for State sovereignty. The effective implementation of the Programme of Action not only requires active efforts on the part of the various countries concerned, but it also warrants wide international collaboration, especially in honouring commitments to international assistance.

In October this year, the world population will reach 6 billion, which will have a huge impact on the social

and economic development of the world and on its environment.

In the implementation of the Programme of Action, all countries should respect universally recognized human rights. For developing countries that should mean, first and foremost, their rights to survival and development. Human rights will not be truly protected, and the population issue will not be effectively tackled, until development is achieved.

The Chinese delegation has participated in the special session of the General Assembly in a positive and constructive manner. On the eve of a new century China, which is the most populous developing country in the world, is willing to further strengthen its collaboration with other countries and international organizations so that it can contribute to the effective implementation of the Programme of Action.

In conclusion, I should like to request that my statement be reflected in the record.

Mr. Abdelaziz (Egypt): At the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development, my delegation submitted a written statement relating to the use in the Programme of Action of the phrase "couples and individuals". While recognizing that this expression was adopted by consensus at the three previous population conferences of 1974, 1984 and 1994, my delegation reiterated its call for the deletion of the word "individuals", since it has always been our understanding that all the questions dealt with by the Programme of Action in this regard related to harmonious relations between couples united by the bond of marriage in the context of the concept of the family as the primary cell of society.

My delegation requests that this statement be reflected in the report of the special session.

Mr. Al-Hajri (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation joined the consensus on this document, but we should like to express our understanding and interpretation of several elements. First, we did so in the context of paragraph 5 of the addendum to the report of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the Twenty-first Special Session of the General Assembly, which states:

> "The implementation of the recommendations contained in the Programme of Action and those contained in the present document is the sovereign right of each country, consistent with national laws and development priorities, with full respect for the various religious and ethical values and cultural backgrounds of its people, and in conformity with universally recognized international human rights."

Secondly, we also affirm that we cannot accept any recommendations contained in this document, or any interpretation of it, that run counter to the Islamic *shariah* or to our national law or national constitution. Thirdly, Qatar's understanding of subparagraph (iii) of paragraph 63 is that it applies to those cases in which abortion is not against the law; it should not be interpreted as promoting abortion, and the right to life should be affirmed.

Fourthly, we understand that the word "gender", wherever it appears, simply refers to men and women and to nothing else.

We request that these reservations be reflected in the records of this session.

Mr. Al-Dailmi (Yemen) (*spoke in Arabic*): The delegation of the Republic of Yemen would like to applaud the great efforts made to achieve consensus, and my delegation would like the thank the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund, Mrs. Nafis Sadik, and the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee, Ambassador Chowdhury, for their efforts. We would also like to reaffirm our support for the final document, and the positive aspects included in for the service of humankind and development.

My delegation would like to reiterate the reservations it expressed at the time of the adoption of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development in 1994 in Cairo. We would like to state that our joining the consensus on the document that has just been adopted is in the context of our conviction that the commitment of the Republic of Yemen to any population policies, goals or actions included in the document depends on their non-violation of the texts and principles of the Islamic *shariah*, our Constitution and the norms and customs of Yemeni society.

My delegation requests that our position be included in the records of the meeting.

Mr. Zarie Zare (Islamic Republic of Iran): Let me take this opportunity to express, on behalf of the

delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran, our sincere thanks and appreciation to you, Sir, for successfully leading the special session, and to Ambassador Chowdhury, the distinguished Chairman of the PrepCom and the Committee of the Whole, for his excellent work in steering the long, difficult negotiations towards the final consensus.

While joining this valuable consensus on the final outcome of the twenty-first special session of the General Assembly, on population and development, and supporting its implementation at both national and international levels, I would like to enter our reservation regarding any provision in the text that condones or encourages, explicitly or otherwise, sexual relations outside the framework of marriage and the family, as defined exclusively as the heterosexual union between man and woman.

The delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran would like to request that its reservation be included in full in the report of the special session. The text of the reservation will be submitted subsequently to the secretariat of the special session.

Mr. Nabih Al-Zenat (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): The delegation of Jordan highly appreciates the efforts by the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the Twenty-first Special Session of the General Assembly, efforts aimed at achieving formulations that reflect common principles among the States and that respect the convictions and characteristics of States. This reflects our profound belief that the international community should respect our values, our national laws, our norms and traditions, and the sovereign right of every nation to establish its own population policy in conformity with its laws, as indicated in the section on principles in the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and paragraph 5 of the present document. We in Jordan will respond to the provisions of this document in the context of these factors.

I request that this intervention be included in the records of the meeting.

Mr. Al-Hammadi (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): We emphasize our reservations with regard to all provisions which contravene our Islamic faith and the *shariah*, our Constitution and laws and our principles. We therefore request the Secretariat to note and record our reservations regarding paragraph 5 of the present document.

Mr. Aouad (Morocco) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like, on behalf of the Kingdom of Morocco, to say that we approve and we welcome this very important work which has been accomplished under your guidance, Sir, and with the help of many people. It is a very fine piece of work, of the utmost importance for human development.

I would like simply to refer to paragraph 5 of the present document. Based on the essential principles of Morocco and, indeed, on the very nature of Morocco and its civilization, I would like to say that it must be very clear that a family is defined by a marriage that binds the two parties, and any ambiguity must be removed. That is why I would like to enter a reservation and to have my reservation noted in the official records of this meeting.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote. We shall now hear from the delegations that have requested to make general statements.

Ms. Pollack (United States of America): On behalf of the United States delegation, I would like to thank our Chairman, Ambassador Chowdhury, for guiding us through this review effort. It is because of his leadership that we are all able today to adopt a comprehensive, well-balanced, action-oriented and very specific set of actions to help all countries further implement the International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action. In creating the document we have adopted today, we have drawn on our individual national experiences and efforts since 1994, and we have collectively agreed on how we can build on these experiences and make our efforts more effective.

Among other things, we have set five-year benchmarks to better measure these efforts in the fundamental areas of education, maternal mortality, family planning and HIV/AIDS prevention. We have asked Governments to meet the needs of youth by developing and investing in plans that will ensure that young people will lead healthy and productive lives. To guide this process, we have called for the involvement of young people and the active support, guidance and participation of parents, supported by families and communities. We have encouraged Governments to build partnerships with non-governmental organizations, especially those committed to women's rights. We have proposed to develop and expand integrated community-based approaches to sustainable development. And we have undeniably reaffirmed the political will and

commitment agreed to in Cairo to carry us through our ambitious 20-year agenda.

We know that this renewed commitment must come with resources. And while I note that the United States has not agreed to the targets for overall development assistance set forth in paragraph 69 of the preparatory committee's report (A/S-21/2/Add.2), we fervently hope that we can increase our assistance in the years to come.

Cairo laid out a global framework that addresses the aspirations of people today. It sets a course to ensure the future quality of life for our children. Governments participating in this five-year review have overwhelmingly agreed to stay true and steady to the course Cairo set us on. Cairo is working. Our collective efforts here this week worked. And we all go back home renewed and rededicated to continue our work for women and their families everywhere in the world.

Mr. March (Australia): Australia strongly supports the principles and Programme of Action on population and development adopted at the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), held at Cairo in 1994. We also welcome and have joined the consensus on the overall review and appraisal of the Programme of Action of the ICPD.

We are concerned at the text put forward in paragraph 63 (iii) of document A/S-21/5/Add.1. We do not see that this elaboration on the Cairo text is necessary. As stated, we welcome the consensus and do not oppose the agreements reached. However, existing Australian aid programme policy is not to provide assistance through the Australian aid programme which involves abortion training or services, or services, trials or activities which directly involve abortion drugs.

Australia commends the diligence and skill of the Chairman of the preparatory committee, Ambassador Chowdhury, in guiding Member States to this welcome agreement. We also acknowledge with appreciation the contributions of Mrs. Sadik.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I call on the representative of the Observer Mission of the Holy See.

Monsignor Reinert (Holy See): The Holy See welcomes the progress that was made over the past few months in the preparatory process for this special session of the General Assembly.

From the outset, my delegation has constantly reiterated its compliance with the guidelines set out in resolution 53/183. As members know, the Holy See, as a participant, was able to join, with serious reservations, in the consensus on the Programme of Action adopted at the Cairo International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD). The Holy See continues to hold those reservations.

Nothing that the Holy See has done in this process should be understood or interpreted as an endorsement of concepts it cannot accept for moral reasons. Especially, nothing is to be understood to imply that the Holy See endorses abortion or has in any way changed its moral position concerning abortion, contraception or sterilization.

The intention therefore of the Holy See is to welcome the consensus decision of the Assembly and accordingly to offer the following statement of interpretation.

The Holy See, in conformity with its nature and its particular mission, by welcoming the adoption of the final document, wishes to express its understanding of the document just adopted.

Regarding the terms "sexual health", "reproductive health" and "sexual and reproductive health", the Holy See considers these terms as applying to a holistic concept of health which embraces the person in the entirety of his or her personality, mind and body, and which fosters the achievement of personal maturity in sexuality and in the mutual love and decision-making that characterize the conjugal relationship in accordance with moral norms. The Holy See does not consider abortion or access to abortion as a dimension of these terms.

With reference to the terms "contraception", "family planning", "reproductive rights", "female-controlled methods", "the widest possible range of family-planning services", "new options", "underutilized methods" and any other term regarding family-planning services and regulation of fertility, the Holy See's welcoming the consensus decision should in no way be interpreted as constituting a change in its well-known position concerning those family-planning methods which the Catholic Church considers morally unacceptable or on family-planning services which do not respect the liberty of the spouses, human dignity and the human rights of those concerned.

With reference to all international agreements, in particular to any existing agreements mentioned in this document, the Holy See reserves its position in this regard, consistent with the Holy See's acceptance or non-acceptance of them.

With reference to the term "couples and individuals", the Holy See understands that this term is to mean married couples and the individual man and woman who constitute the couple. The document, especially in its use of this term, remains marked by an individualistic understanding of sexuality which does not give due attention to the mutual love and decision-making that characterize the conjugal relationship.

The Holy See interprets references to "family" and "families" in the light of principle 9 of the Programme of Action, that is, in terms of the duty to strengthen the family, the basic unit of society, and in terms of marriage as an equal partnership between man and woman, that is, husband and wife.

With regard to the term "gender", the Holy See reserves its position with the understanding that this is grounded in biological sexual identity, that is, the two sexes, male and female.

The Holy See reaffirms that the education of "young people", including "children", "adolescents", "young men", and "young women", including education on sexual and reproductive health, is primarily and fundamentally the right, duty and responsibility of parents, in accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

With regard to the access of "young people", including "adolescents", "young men", and "young women", to family-planning services and reproductive health services, the Holy See considers that this is to mean married couples and the individual men and women who constitute such couples. In this the Holy See wishes to give emphasis to the particular aspect of mutual love and decision-making that characterize the marital relationship.

Specifically as regards paragraph 73 (a), the Holy See interprets "the rights of adolescents to privacy, confidentiality and informed consent" in the context of issues surrounding, *inter alia*, sexual abuse, violence or incest. In order for parents to assume their rights, duties and responsibilities to guide their children, their prior human rights in the choice of the education of their children must not be abrogated, and every effort must be made by Governments and by civil society to assist parents in fulfilling this essential role. In this regard the Holy See further interprets "respecting their cultural values and religious beliefs" to refer to the cultural values and religious beliefs of their parents, that is until the adolescent attains the age of majority. The Holy See requests that this interpretation be noted in paragraph 73 (a).

With respect to paragraph 63, the Holy See affirms that human life begins at the moment of conception and that life must be defended and protected. The Holy See can never condone abortion or policies which favour abortion. The Holy See further affirms that the right of conscience of health-service providers is assured by, *inter alia*, article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Holy See requests that this interpretation be noted in paragraph 63.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly has thus concluded its consideration of agenda items 8 and 9.

Closing statement by the President

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): My statement will be a brief one, in keeping with the guidelines issued to delegations at this special session.

We can say that we have seen at this session a reaffirmation of an approach to United Nations activities that is based on education; it evolved at Rio de Janeiro at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, and was reaffirmed in terms of human rights, and then related to social development at the Copenhagen World Summit for Social Development, to women's issues at the Fourth World Conference on Women, held at Beijing, and to human habitats at the Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, held at Istanbul.

The International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), held at Cairo, was a part of that process, as is this twenty-first special session of the General Assembly.

Secondly, the very fact that we have held this special session is of great importance. Representatives of Governments, of non-governmental organizations and of civil society have come here to tell of their policies, programmes, ideas and present and future actions; this in itself is a significant fact. It means the democratization and universalization of information and knowledge.

Thirdly, I would stress that, in a world of 1.2 billion young people, our attention to their education and health, their life orientation and their participation in the establishment of responsible family units is doubtless one contribution that must not elude the consensus of a meeting whose ultimate goal is the development of the human person.

The issues of the protection and education of women, the prevention of harm they may suffer, their reproductive and sexual health and rights, gender equality and family planning are all based in science and inevitably rest on social, cultural and ethical dimensions. Hence, the difficulty of achieving absolute unanimity with respect to these issues.

In conclusion, we believe that the document, at over 100 paragraphs, will certainly be used as a working paper. Our work does not conclude with this session — it is ongoing and must develop harmoniously alongside the evolution of international society, where these exchanges today are taking place. Consequently, at this special session we cannot declare ourselves triumphant on some doctrines and concepts and defeated on others. We can only say that the international community as a whole assumes the shared responsibility to address population and development as one unshirkable and indivisible binomial.

From that perspective, it has indeed been a great pleasure for me to preside over this session and to receive the good wishes and contributions of all.

I declare the twenty-first special session of the General Assembly closed.

The meeting rose at 12.05 a.m. on Saturday, 3 July.